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CONTENTS

DAVID BUTLER

Convention and Conference

p. 195

R. KOEBNER

The Concept of Western Civilization

p. 207

H. L. STEWART

The Instability of France

p. 225

HARRY G. JOHNSON

The Economics of Undertaking

p. 240

Book Reviews

p. 245

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The Listener

A B B C PUBLICATION

THREEPENCE EVERY THURSDAY

CONVENTION AND CONFERENCE

DAVID BUTLER

1

THERE is a great and mutual failure on the part of the British and the Americans to understand each other's political systems. Otherwise quite well-informed Washington journalists can be heard speaking as though the King were personally responsible for the myriad acts done in the name of the Crown, or manifesting the most exaggerated notions of Cabinet instability; and some Congressmen suffer from far more naïve illusions. In London, newspapermen and politicians often reveal an abysmal ignorance of the nature of the Separation of Powers, and seem unaware of the limitations on Federal authority which arise from the United States being ruled not by one but by forty-nine distinct Governments. This unfamiliarity with an alternative framework under which democracy can flourish easily leads to a narrow assumption of the perfection of one's own way of Government and of its universal applicability. It is surprising how little the Constitutions of the Commonwealth, even those involving a federal system, owe to American experience, and it is astonishing that so inventive and experimental a people as the Americans should never, in all the State Constitutions they have evolved, have tried Parliamentary Government.

If, between the two countries, there is some mutual incomprehension of Constitutions, there is a far more complete failure to sense the different atmospheres in which Government operates. The importance of log-rolling and lobbying defeats the British understanding just as the conspiracy of silence under which so much of British politics is carried on baffles Americans. But, of all aspects of politics, the working of the party systems of the two countries probably presents the greatest difficulty at three thousand miles distance. This article, although no more than a series of personal reflections, tries to explore some of the contrasts offered by party assemblies on each side of the Atlantic.

Such a study can hardly lead to prescriptions for improvement. In one of two things striking similarities may be noticed between the parties in the two countries but in general the differences are too profound for either to find much to learn in the experience of the other. Both systems are far from perfect but both must work out their salvations independently. Yet there is still good reason to compare such different systems. Between all the parties there is the common underlying purpose of winning and keeping control of the

machinery of the state by democratic means. That common purpose and those common means find expression in a common but confusing terminology. In every detail British and American parties may differ but, 'separated by the barrier of a common language' they use identical words to describe different things. A party, a policy, a candidate and a conference have, in two fundamentally different atmospheres, so little in common that they barely merit the same titles.

This contrast was vividly brought home to the writer by his experience in attending three party Conventions in America in 1948 and three party Conferences in Britain in 1949 and again in 1950. The ephemeral remarks and issues of these diverse gatherings slip easily from memory but there is left a certain residue of ideas about the nature of party assemblies and the difference between British and American political habits.

2

Many purposes may underlie a party gathering. The selection of leaders and the formulation of policy are usually the ostensible objects. But the question of leadership may not be raised or may in practice have been settled beforehand; and, since an *ad hoc* body of a thousand or more delegates, meeting for three or four days at most, is not the ideal deliberative assembly, the formulation of policy is usually reduced to the meek endorsement of a completely prepared programme. Nevertheless, such a meeting provides an opportunity for self-discovery. The leaders can discreetly feel the party's pulse through the speeches of the rank and file or through the conversations in the corridors, and much organizing work can conveniently be achieved. But perhaps the main aims of a party gathering are to generate enthusiasm and foster a sense of party unity in the delegates, and to secure publicity before the nation. Flagging energies of local leaders can be wonderfully roused by the right sort of speeches and by the stimulus of contact with hordes of like-minded people from all over the country. And, in an age when political battles are increasingly fought in newspaper headlines and when a thousand listen to a radio bulletin for every one who attends a political meeting, it must benefit a party greatly to have three or four days in the forefront of the news.

Two elements in a successful conference are easily forgotten. Delegates are often busy people sacrificing some of their annual holiday to their political enthusiasm. But in many of them partisan zeal is not enough to dispel their taste for less serious entertainment. Even if hotel space and meeting hall capacity did not compel parties in America to have their gatherings in great cities and in England in seaside resorts, the desires of delegates would probably have the

same effect. Anyone who has seen American politicians expanding in the night-clubs of Philadelphia or Labour M.P.s twirling on the merry-go-rounds of Blackpool would realize how useful such relaxations are in producing the general air of harmony which the managers of these assemblies aim to produce — although there is, of course, the danger of excessive harmony. Nothing will please delegates more than a judicious spice of conflict and 'drama', for nothing is more boring than unanimity and even the greatest enthusiasm must begin to flag after three or four days of uncontentious speeches and noble perorations. But it is equally essential to check unnecessary fractiousness; and, to achieve general success, an efficient organization of the physical surroundings of the assembly and the facilities for publicity is needed. Any attempt to assemble a few thousand people within four walls must inevitably lead to general discomfort. The longer the conference lasts the harder grow the seats and the sharper the elbows of the jostling crowds. The ubiquitous and deadening microphone, designed to bring speakers into closer touch with the audience, only does so at the expense of making them more unreal. The British delegates do not yet have to endure the intolerable heat of television floodlamps nor quite the ceaseless Transatlantic barrage of exploding flashlights; and the English climate, with all its faults, is never guilty of quite such excessive temperatures as the American. None the less the conscientious delegate who sits through a British Conference can congratulate himself on a considerable feat of physical as well as intellectual endurance. As important as the task of alleviating the sufferings of the delegates is the expediency of keeping the jaundiced pressmen happy. The most honest of them cannot but be influenced by their surroundings and good seats, adequate entertainment and satisfactory 'releases' may help to secure their attention and soften their adjectives.

But no stage-management can altogether stifle the self-revelation of a party assembly. The general attitude of the rank and file, the presence — or absence — of intellectual activity among them, the ability of the leaders and the quality of the party's electoral appeal will inevitably become apparent.

3

The traditional absurdities of American Conventions have perhaps attracted overmuch attention. 'It is like nothing else in the civilized world; and critics... have exhausted the language of vituperation in attack upon its character', wrote Professor Laski; and many would support him. It is true that, to the dispassionate observer, Conventions as now conducted hardly seem an ideal way of selecting Presidential candidates. Apart from the

handicap to rational conduct which the full heat of the American summer must impose upon anyone, the organized pandemonium, the bands and the demonstrations, the intentionally vacuous and time-consuming speeches, the ill-disciplined audience, and the stunts and diversions of the candidates are scarcely designed to foster sane and objective deliberation. Yet the absurdities can easily be put out of proportion. The saving grace of the 'ballyhoo' is that few of the participants take it wholly seriously; it was interesting at the Republican and Democratic Conventions to watch as dutifully cheering delegates who were participating in prolonged demonstrations slipped out for a 'coke' and a rest, while it was frightening at the Wallace Convention to observe the wild and unrestrained enthusiasm of the demonstrators who seemed genuinely to mistake emotional orgies for rational politics. American Conventions, although replete with public silliness and private intrigue, are probably on balance not ineffective instruments for their major purpose — the selection of the party standard-bearer most acceptable to the bulk of the delegates. On rare occasions they may also prove effective in clarifying some really fundamental division on policy and showing where the centre of gravity of the party lies — as happened at the Democratic Convention of 1948. There is no doubt that the 'ballyhoo' helps to secure national publicity; indeed the pursuit of that aim may be largely responsible for the competitive absurdity in which the parties have indulged. Today some optimists are hoping that the advent of television may lead to some recovery of dignity, but such expectations are likely to be as vain as those expressed a quarter of a century ago when the same outcome was foreseen from the development of radio. It should not, however, be thought that the Conventions are wholly incapable of dignity or seriousness. The predominant note about the proceedings may seem to imply a frivolity of approach but there are interludes which reveal both earnestness and good manners. And business gets done.

It is surprising how similar is the Convention procedure of the older parties and extraordinary how their outward forms were so closely aped by Mr. Wallace's supporters when they assembled to launch a new one. The welcoming addresses; the selection of a Temporary Chairman as 'keynoter' and later of a permanent Chairman; the weary round of general, rallying speeches by party leaders, intent on displeasing no one; the brief formality of accepting the party platform (though here the Democrats were an exception with regard to one plank and the Progressives, in a sense, with regard to all); the interminable laudatory nominating speeches; the slightly synthetic demonstration in favour of each candidate (although, again, the Progressives with their unrestrained enthusiasm provided an exception); and, interspersed in every session, the musical inter-

ludes and the prayers — by ministers of every denomination in discreet rotation; these superfluities constituted the bulk of the public proceedings of each Convention.

But, while their similarity may legitimately be stressed, the diversity of the 1948 Conventions was great, both in temper and achievement. Though for all of them the main outward business was the selection of candidates, the Republican Convention was the only one in which there was ever any serious doubt about who would emerge as the Presidential nominee; and in every case the Presidential nominee's selection of the Vice-Presidential candidate was accepted with meek enthusiasm.

The Republican Convention was devoted almost solely to the manoeuvrings of Governor Dewey, Senator Taft and Mr Stassen and of the two or three others who had hopes of filling the void if the leaders should deadlock. At the end of seventy two hours of intensive dealing (and, perhaps, double-dealing) on all sides, Governor Dewey won over enough delegates to secure early nomination. If he lacked great personal popularity (and his acceptance speech was greeted with, by the Conventional standards, remarkable lukewarmness) he was undoubtedly the most acceptable of the major candidates, standing as he did, the personification of neutral efficiency, between the more positive personalities and suspect policies of his rivals.

At the Democratic Convention, once the Eisenhower bogey had been dispelled, the only things to be decided were what degree of unanimity could be mustered behind President Truman's renomination and whether the split over Negro Civil Rights could be decently veiled. The Republican Convention had abounded in confidence; the clichés about nominating 'the next President of the United States' were taken, not as flowers of rhetoric, but as platitudes. The Democrats, by contrast, met in profound gloom and behaved with all but overt defeatism until the last day of the Convention when the excitement generated by the passage, through rank and file rebellion, of a categorical Civil Rights plank, together with the bellicosity of Mr Truman's acceptance speech managed to put some heart into the Party.

The Wallace Convention, that pathetically futile attempt to launch a third party into the American scene, was held in the same hall as its rivals and was conducted with, on the whole, the same procedure; but it was basically different in kind. It was a gathering of laymen, not politicians; a certain well-organized cadre might be managing affairs from the top but the ordinary delegates were burning with a naïve and youthful enthusiasm which had never been damped by contact with brutal political reality. Unworried by problems of practicality, the party was able to appeal to the Negro and the Zionist, to the pacifist and the fellow-traveller and to a wide

range of people disillusioned with the old parties. The lack of any fundamental unity between these people was discreetly masked by the general and extreme enthusiasm for the Messianic Mr Wallace. This sufficed to turn the Convention from being a parody of the others into something that was a unique compromise between a religious revival and a campus 'cheer-rally'.

But through all three Conventions there ran a common thread. Each was a demonstration of what, to the European visitor, is the supreme American quality — irrepressible, exuberant, unreflecting vitality. In hotel lobbies and in scorching streets, in demonstrations and in long night sessions, one never ceased to wonder at the evidence of restless, unconquerable — and often purposeless — energy.

4

The British Conferences were altogether more peaceful affairs. It is not only that Hastings in March or even Blackpool at Whitsun are more restful than Philadelphia in mid-summer. The whole tone of the gatherings was outwardly serious and free from artificial excitements. With surprisingly few frills the Conferences were devoted to the discussion of current political issues. The fact that the agenda was carefully arranged by the Party Executive and that revolt from the floor on any major question was almost as unlikely as in an American Convention did not discourage three or four days of earnest oratory. At Conventions almost all the speeches are campaign speeches with little pretence of close reasoning. At Conferences, although the bulk of the speeches have the flavour of the public platform rather than the deliberative assembly, there is a much greater show of logical argument. However, although a British party may pride itself on devoting its conferences to serious discussion and clarification of policy, anyone is deluded who thinks that serious discussion can be carried on naturally before about a thousand diverse delegates. Even at its highest a Conference tends to confuse rationalization with reason and slogans with arguments.

That does not mean that British Conferences serve no intellectual end. Many delegates must go home more willing and more competent to argue for policies they have heard publicly defended and overwhelmingly endorsed. But the main utility of a Conference is for the Executive to be able to feel the party's pulse and to shape its course accordingly. The speeches from the rostrum and the private conversations in the lobbies and hotels give information on the general movement of opinion. Competent leaders can usually secure some show of unanimity on the floor of the Conference but they will be eager to learn just how much freedom the rank and file will allow them without revolting.

Procedure varies in detail but in general the Conference agenda is made up of debates, from one to three hours long, upon resolutions moved by the Executive or from the floor and usually covering some major aspect of party policy. On each there is an indefinite number of speeches from delegates, probably with a five-minute time limit, and then a member of the Executive replies before a vote on the resolution is taken. But the Executive very seldom fails to win a comfortable majority.

However, the meekness of the Labour and Conservative delegates was not of like nature. The former, although conscious of the need for responsibility and caution which arose from having a government of their own in power, were none the less uneasy in their submission to discipline from the platform. They had behind them a long tradition of Conference discussions and decisions on policy and a closely fought and narrow vote on a basic issue would have seemed less out of place among them than among the Conservatives, long accustomed to rank-and-file endorsement of leaders and of policy without vote or deep contention.

The Liberals, fighting their protracted but losing battle against extinction, revealed themselves at their Assemblies to be as always, the most loosely knit of parties. Diversity of opinion, amiable yet wide, was expressed on many issues; but the Executive steamrolled through its resolutions for all the world as though it really believed it was going to form the next Government and must on no account be hampered by any indiscreet commitments. Tradition and a genuine fervour for a moderate solution of the nation's problems, untainted by the vested interests of Socialism or Toryism, inspired them. But their proceedings could not escape an air of sober, well-meaning woolliness.

The Labour Party, gathering in 1949 at Blackpool, was more practical, but perhaps no more realist. Firm management of the agenda stifled the expression of any of the more serious conflicts within the party, while the essential national problems of productivity, and exports received surprisingly little attention. The delegates, stolid Trade Unionists and eager Fabians, were conscious of the need to unite for the coming election. So, despite forthright statement of some grievances, party-self-criticism was limited and the Executive easily won the free hand they demanded to shape the party's policy along the general lines they had put forward. And the delegates went home, if not stirred to thought, at least warmed to action by the rousing oratory of Mr Bevan and Mr Morrison. At Margate a year later the party met in a more chastened but if anything a more united mood. Disappointment at one election result and apprehension about the next led to a more hesitant attitude. The critics having no point on which to unite in rebellion were hardly

able to embarrass or to help the leadership in its almost public uncertainty about the direction in which it should find its policy. The contrast between the 1949 and 1950 Labour Conferences lay less in a difference in form or substance than in the greater buoyancy manifest at the former.

It was not the same with the Conservatives. In 1949 they suffered by holding their Conference in the Empress Hall in London. Both hall and city by their all-submerging vastness, proved ill-suited to party conference. The Conservatives were as far as their rivals from coming to grips with the national problems but, being in opposition, they were able to devote more energy to attacking the other side and few opportunities were missed. The possibility of an early return to power seemed to trouble the leadership and it would commit the party to little that was new in principle or specific in detail. To such an attitude the speakers from the floor were more meekly acquiescent than at the other Conferences. In 1950, in the more euphoric and appropriate atmosphere of Blackpool, the Conservatives exuded a more authentic confidence in imminent electoral success and, while their resolutions were as vague and their speeches as conventional as the year before, they were heartened by two slightly spurious revolts from the floor; even on the more important of these, when the rank-and-file induced a cautious executive to make a specific rather than a general pledge on house building, there was no real conflict but at least the delegates were cheered by the illusion that they had shaped the party's course instead of merely acquiescing in it. On both occasions the Conservatives ended their Conference with something which American Conventions so grossly overdo and which British Conferences tend to neglect — the straight 'pep' speech. Mr Churchill, endowed not only with his own immense qualities but also with that rather Olympian grandeur which the constitution of the Conservative party invests upon 'The Leader', addressed the assembled party with speeches which, although not among his greatest, were, by force of personality and language, far above anything else in either Conference. British Conferences are so earnest in outward purpose that, while most of the speeches may be more suited to the hustings than to debate, they are hampered by being tied to an agenda. Since one of the aims of a party gathering is to generate enthusiasm, it could well afford the time for one or two of its best speakers to orate with that end alone in view. The 'keynote' speech may play a useful role — if a true keynote is struck and if the number of speeches of that nature is strictly limited.

If energy, excessive energy, was the predominant impression derived from attending the Conventions, respectability, excessive respectability was the predominant impression which the Conferences left. Here and there, there may have been a little strong

language about the other side but there was in general a flavour of sweet reasonableness and Sunday-best.

5

In the contrast between the party gatherings on either side of the Atlantic one may see, perhaps in caricature, some of the more fundamental differences in outlook and political structure of the two countries.

It would be foolish to say that American life is naturally as exuberant and absurd as a Convention would suggest or that Englishmen are normally as sombre and earnest as they appear in Conference. But it is true that the British, far more than the Americans, still cherish the illusion that rational discussion moves the mass of people more than the subtleties of advertising and that deliberation is more important than publicity.

To take another instance, Americans are not altogether unfamiliar with party responsibility or the British with fighting their political battles in terms of personalities. But in America, where parties embrace such diverse elements and where executive responsibility rests so unequivocally on one man, it is natural that party gatherings should try to avoid controversial issues and to concentrate their energies on the selection of that one man. In Britain, on the other hand, where parties are more unified and the traditions of collective cabinet—and party—responsibility are well established, it is natural that party conferences should be devoted ostensibly to deciding what their policy is. Yet the real contrast is not quite so sharp, for in America choice of policy is to some extent embodied in the choice of candidate, while in Britain considerations of personality are to some extent implicit in discussions on policy.

Another example is offered in the paradox by which the American party, which is so loosely disciplined in Congress, dons the mask of unanimity in Convention, while the British party, which usually speaks and almost always votes in harmony in Parliament, appears eager for the expression of diverse views in Conference. The explanation is that the British party is relatively so united and the British politician so dependent for his future on party obedience that difference of opinion can, within limits, be tolerated and even encouraged. But the bonds which link the various sections of an American party, while based on some common interests, are not so strong—or so comprehensive—that it can afford to risk, at its quadrennial gatherings, any unnecessary airing of contentious topics. If some conflict is needed to prevent the Convention being dull, it is preferable that it should be about personalities rather than principles, for, however much personalities may embody principles,

the battle can be fought in terms of individual and regional loyalties and the risk of opening up one of the deep fissures that lie beneath the party's surface can be minimized.

Party gatherings reveal the regionalism of America and the relative unity of the British political structure. Politicians in Britain make surprisingly few references to their local affiliations; cleavages, when they appear, are more often along occupational than geographic lines. Americans, on the other hand, leave no doubt that the State is the basic political unit and that, in addition, there are strong regional loyalties. This geographic attraction, which manifests itself in special concern for the candidates and interests of neighbouring States, is of negligible importance in so small and homogeneous a country as Britain — except perhaps in the case of the Scots and the Welsh.

But if, to the Englishman, an American Conference illustrates an unfamiliar regionalism, a British Conference must reveal to the American a singularly deep-rooted class structure and a remarkably open linking of political parties with social strata. It is true that there were more trade unionists at the Democratic than at the Republican Convention, but in general if one met a group of American delegates it would be hard to judge from outward appearance to which party they belonged. No such hesitation would be necessary in Britain. Even if the better level of Conservative tailoring were not instantly noticeable, the more cultivated accents which predominate at their gatherings would reveal the politics of the speakers as quickly as their opening words from the rostrum: 'Mr Chairman, My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen . . .' which echoed in strange contrast to the Labour 'Mr Chairman and Comrades . . .' And in the overhearty applause given by Conservatives to authentic voices from the working class one could sense an earnest attempt to be democratic by a party which has not fully abandoned its liking for a well-differentiated class structure. In the Labour Party Conferences, although some of the speakers were much more open than the Conservatives in the expression of class prejudice and others jibbed unhappily at the word 'comrade', the accents of Eton and Oxford mingled less awkwardly with those of Hackney and Wigan than in their rivals' deliberations.

In America Conventions are only quadrennial and coincide with the approach of elections. In Britain, although Conferences are held annually, the Conferences, both in 1949 and 1950, were the last each party expected to hold before an impending election. And so they too had a special campaigning flavour. The 'close the ranks' argument, so strong in Conventions, had wide influence. But it was interesting to note that, while remarks dispensing with the formality of an election — 'we are met here to nominate the next President of

the United States . . . ' — always won hearty applause, their British equivalents — 'when we form the next Government' — were much less used and much less successful when used. The British elections were of course more remote but that could not be the sole explanation for the difficulty of raising comparable fervour. Is it just that the British are a less demonstrative — or a more sceptical — people?

6

There was an English journalist at the Conventions who went round all his American acquaintances spluttering with indignation because 'It was all so absurd. Nothing like a Labour Party Conference . . . ' This revealed lack, not only of tact, but also of understanding. It is as foolish to think that British methods would be applicable or desirable in America as it is to expect any radical change in the Convention system without a radical and as yet unforeseeable change in the American attitude to politics. While the American way of Government may, in many details, be inefficient and extravagant, it does work. Perfectionists who demand a more deliberate approach to the construction of party policy are demanding that questions should be opened which a Convention is unsuited to settle, and which would inevitably disturb the harmony and smooth running of affairs. It may be that the unification of the United States, that slow but continuous process, will in time reach a stage when parties can develop from loose regional coalitions into groups with a coherent philosophy and policy. But that stage has not yet been reached. For the present the Convention will continue as a practical if not an ideal means of selecting a national standard-bearer and, on occasion, as a means of clarifying the party's general policy when a split between two wings has become too serious to be glossed over.

British Conferences, in their turn, fall short of being ideal policy-deciding bodies; the number of delegates and the time available place severe limitations on their effectiveness. Furthermore, they cannot always be said to face the real issues which confront the country or to set common sense above short-sighted electioneering. But such faults usually represent weaknesses in the parties who run them rather than in the Conference system itself. Conferences will continue to be invaluable in welding parties together, in securing useful views on policy and in gaining publicity.

But party assemblies must be put in a larger context. Delegates are, at best, representative only of the politically conscious few — and only of some of them, the loyal and active partisans. The turn of the many comes at election time, but then they have no choice except between the alternatives which have been selected for them

by the few. These alternatives are inevitably oversimplified, or even falsified, for the benefit of a huge and diverse electorate. Party gatherings may worry earnestly about the welfare of the nation but they are also concerned with preparing the bait which, it is thought, will prove most attractive to that composite abstraction, the ordinary voter. Such pandering is inevitable in the present state of Western Democracy, and it is useless to rail against the fallen nature of political man. But there is a danger of slipping into helpless pragmatism. Party Assemblies in Britain and America work; they serve adequately certain limited purposes. Yet it would be well if all those connected with them would remember how far they fall short of the ideal. The publicity they achieve does not serve as the perfect form of propaganda for democracy or of education for the ignorant voter. The best man and the best policy are far from always winning, or even securing a fair hearing. And it is often forgotten that there exists a vast mass of inarticulate and non-partisan opinion which can find little expression among the party dogmatists at their gatherings and still less in the narrow choice of the ballot-box.

THE CONCEPT OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

R. KOEBNER

1

WHEN asked in what context the notion of Western Civilization has attained its prominent position in contemporary writing and speech, we shall have no difficulty in singling out three groups of relevant circumstances. The concept, firstly, plays a part in discussions concerning the structure of universal history. Western Civilization is that civilization which has developed inside and radiated from Western society. Western society and its civilization are supposed to be one of the 'intelligible units' of historical study. The second point of view is political. The Western nations are stated to be united in a solidarity closer and more spontaneous than that implied in the obligations of United Nations member states. Their solidarity is asserted to be rooted not solely in the general interests of peace and welfare, but in a mutual understanding with regard to fundamental values of public and private life. But — thirdly — these 'Western values' are now being examined critically. Facts which either testify to an intrinsic deterioration of Western cultural standards or betray complacency about the superiority of the West in relation to other civilizations are no longer ignored.

The reflections offered in the following pages are related to the first of these circumstances. They try to indicate ways of approach by which the unity of Western Civilization may be made the subject of historical investigation. But in order to identify these problems of history we shall do well to take our start from the third of the contexts mentioned: from contemporary estimates of Western cultural standards.

Such calling to account has been the aim of the late J. Huizinga in his last book *Geschonden Wereld*. He sets out from reflections on traditional notions, discussing first those of 'culture' and 'civilization' and then that of the 'West' as opposed to the 'East'. He states a paradox. The name of a point of the compass seems little suited for defining properties of a civilization. Nevertheless we cannot, he thinks, do without these syntheses: 'the West' and 'the East'. In their juxtaposition, designating different worlds of civilization, they have a familiar ring. Later on Huizinga is concerned with types of civilization belonging to the West. He thinks it advisable to recognize a plurality of types, such as the 'Latin' and the 'Anglo-Saxon', rather than to labour for a formula embracing the whole 'West'. However, that whole is a living reality to him. This fact emerges

towards the end of his discussion, unconsciously, it seems, but the more convincingly for that. He refers to the West in calling it 'our West': 'Our Western world cannot and must not be identified with the present state of culture.'

Without entering into his criticism, we may observe Huizinga's attitude to the term. He seems not to agree with A. J. Toynbee's statement according to which Western Civilization is an 'intelligible unit'. Nevertheless it means a distinct unit, to wit: the unit of civilization which comprises the author's self. It is the 'Ourselves' in which his 'Myself' is embedded. The author could scarcely speak of 'our' Western world as heedlessly as he does if he had not long lived in the conviction of belonging to it. This testimony contrasts strangely with his assertion that the term 'Western culture' conveys no palpable meaning. But the contrasting evidences are both to be thought well founded.

Huizinga denied recognition to the term, though he nevertheless paid allegiance to it. He thought it, we may infer, a living concept, but at the same time felt bewildered when he noticed the arbitrary use made of it in modern historical writing and modern public life. In its contemporary setting the concept looked no longer familiar, but suspiciously new-fangled. And Huizinga was right in the assumption that recent usage had endowed the concept with a prominence and a variety of connotations not allied to it only a few decades ago. It says much that the Oxford Dictionaries all but ignore such nomenclature. 'Western Civilization' and 'Western Culture', these terms, it appears, started their career during the First World War. In August 1915 several scholars, led by F. S. Marvin, co-operated at Woodbroke, near Birmingham, in a course of lectures on 'The Unity of Western Civilization' (published afterwards in a well-known book). The intention was 'to reflect on those common and ineradicable elements in the civilization of the West which tend to form a real commonwealth of nations and will survive even the most shattering of conflicts'. In view of the cataclysm of those days the attention of the contributors was directed to the common traditions and common achievements of Western Europe and its colonial creations overseas. In these achievements they hoped to discover a reliable basis for international co-operation on the largest scale and in respect of all human interests. Just at that time a German scientist, Oswald Spengler, was engaged in scrutinizing the results of Western cultural development. He argued in terms and arrived at conclusions incompatible with those of the Woodbroke symposium. While affirming that Western peoples formed a historical unit, he stated that this unit had become void of real creativity after having passed from the stage of 'culture' to that of 'civilization'.

The difference of the two approaches — and at the same time the

relative novelty of the approach on both sides — is characteristically illustrated by divergent attitudes towards Russia. Spengler held that this nation represented a cultural unit of its own, whose career was now at an early stage. Marvin dealt with the Eastern ally, in passing remarks, as with a hopeful adept of Western education. The political situation of the day set the German heretic at ease in his reflections, while it imposed restraint on the inferences to be drawn from the past by an English humanist. Obviously, to think that Western society was the natural framework of enduring political co-operation would, at that time, have been an assumption in conflict with historical experience. Nowadays pronouncements of public men go far to make the political alignment of Western nations look like a necessary result of primary cultural conditions. Such reasoning would, however, have considerably embarrassed statesmen of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who did not ask for such foundations when establishing systems of alliance and co-operation.

But as in reasoning about culture, so in political pleading, the rallying-cry in the name of the West would not be thought now fit to elicit a response were it not addressed to people who think it natural to be addressed collectively. Such an appeal presupposes that the audience feels aptly identified when called by the name of 'the Western world' and not by that of any unit either larger or smaller. In contemporary public life and literature the concept of 'the West' has been applied to adventurous uses: to summarizing world-embracing tensions of politics on the one hand, to inaugurating systems of historical thought on the other. These uses embody peculiar experiences and visions. The new ventures have been based on the certainty that the concept imparts a definite meaning to contemporaries — a meaning to be ascertained not in the spheres of science and politics but in that of social consciousness. But, whatever the new implications may be, the concept is understood to symbolize a large community, which members of different nations know to be that community to which they belong by birth and education. The concept is appropriate to designating the 'Ourselves' from which their 'Myselfs' emerge.

This elementary fact implies a lesson for the historian concerned with the discernible unit of civilization represented by the concept. He must pay special attention to what this unit has meant in the course of time to men embraced by it. He must follow up the function fulfilled in history by the consciousness of participating in that larger whole. He must study the changing meanings in which this consciousness has been effective, and the extent of its efficiency. He must get a vision of the ways in which the 'Ourselves' of Western social consciousness proved to be a real factor in the interplay of sentiments, ideas and interests, which determined aims and achieve-

ments, conflicts and harmonies in the history of the peoples implied.

Obviously such an investigation will contribute to the task of delineating and identifying Western Civilization as a whole and its place in universal history. Since the days when this project was launched by the Woodbroke symposium and *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, it has repeatedly attracted attention. We may single out, as an early but by no means superseded attempt, Max Weber's preliminary remarks to the *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*; as a recent attempt animated by topical problems, E. L. Woodward's address, *The Heritage of Western Civilization* ('International Affairs', April 1949); and, midway between these, the Introduction to A. J. Toynbee's *Study of History*. These authors are on the whole in agreement with each other about what identifies the historical unit (though Max Weber impaired his argument by sometimes including and sometimes excluding Hellenism). But their manners of historical approach differ from one another. Weber emphasized the peculiarities of Western rationalism not to be paralleled in other civilizations. Toynbee, on the contrary, wishes to get a view of what Western society has in common with other civilizations, the stages of development which they all share. And Woodward returns to discuss the particularities of the Western tradition. Of these aspects each is important and each would call for consideration in the research suggested here. But this research would have a method of its own. For the authors mentioned, the individuality of Western Civilization has been a datum of history to be taken for granted. They are concerned with special aspects of this individual whole: with its position in time and space, with the vicissitudes of its career, with dominating aims in which specific Western values became defined. But the investigation which might more profitably be undertaken would be a study of the mutual influences of these manifestations of the wholeness of Western Civilization on the one hand and of the consciousness of this wholeness on the other. Whether and to what extent the historian is entitled to speak of historical units or 'wholes' except as far as the individuality of the whole is acknowledged by members of the unit, is a problem of method which we shall not discuss here. But with regard to 'the whole' of Western Civilization, it is fairly certain that we arrived at its identification not by discovering its characteristics in scientific study but by realizing that it has been a living factor in the social and spiritual life of the nations concerned. We know of it because of being conscious of it as an active element in history. The emphasis laid on 'the West' as the common name is, indeed, as we have just seen, of recent date and is related to critical tests to which this consciousness has been put in the present age. We must expect to find other nomenclature

besides the 'Occidental' when we trace the consciousness backward in history. We must be prepared to find that it has been subject to many changes and many dissensions. But in these changes and dissensions we have to watch its growth.

2

Some of the decisive stages of the development into which we inquire are bound to come to light in a more detailed assessment of what is at present implied in the concept of Western Civilization. Modern discussion which makes use of the concept craves for practical results to be elicited from stirring appeals to the Western cultural consciousness. There may be delusion in taking for granted the idea, 'We of the Western world and our common concerns.' But from these notions we must try to find our way backwards.

The meaning of the concept is to be examined in two respects: first, with regard to the vital matters of the supposed common concern; secondly, with regard to the groups of persons who are supposed to share these concerns. Both questions are closely inter-related. They would be wholly inseparable if the community to be identified were not that of Western society, but one of the particular communities which are embraced by this larger unit: communities of religion, nationality, statehood, social position. The 'Ourselves' of religion is manifested in professions of faith and in forms of practising the faith. The 'Ourselves' of nationality has in most cases an elementary testimony in the mutual understanding of individuals who speak the same language. It, together with statehood, is manifested more strikingly when political and social emergencies call for loyalty. That there is an 'Ourselves' of class solidarity is brought home by contests concerning social privilege and conditions of work.

Of every one of these communities, what Renan asserted to be characteristic of a nation may be thought to be true: the community relies on 'a plebiscite of every day'. Each one of them represents one of the vital concerns of man in society. Western society and civilization, liable though they are to identification, cannot be identified so obtrusively, just because of their multifarious interlacing with those other communities and their vital interests. In their case we must, therefore, keep separate the two questions mentioned: that of the common causes and that of the groups of people which have these causes in common.

In the total of Western concerns many values which rank high in national, religious and social loyalties are bound to have a place. Nevertheless an enumeration of principles and institutions which are cherished by these loyalties would not by itself result in a convincing

interpretation of what seems to be the unifying bond of 'Western Civilization' to those who believe in it. In each of these connections sectional obligations have given proof of an overriding power, which makes the solidarity of the West appear precarious. In this respect Western society differs as greatly from national societies as from those more extensive units with which the *Study of History* has advised us to compare it. It is lacking those palpable symbols which in other cases go either with common language or with authoritative institutions. None of its member-nations could ever have given such reasons for its allegiance to a common 'Western' cause, as, according to Herodotus (VIII, 144), the Athenians gave for their loyalty to the common Greek cause after Salamis: belonging to a whole which 'is of one blood and of one speech, and has establishments of gods in common, and sacrifices, and habits of life of similar mode'. Western society is divided in language. Its member-nations purport to embody civilizations of their own. Christianity has inside the Western orbit made for divided loyalties and contrasting types of national culture and social habit. The 'Ourselves' of Western civilization is clearly of a kind which we would not easily find paralleled in other civilizations.

But this Western 'Ourselves', this belonging to a community of the West, is, we have had evidence, asserted spontaneously. And there is a specific notion which enters the minds of men spontaneously and instantaneously whenever they speak of their civilization as that of the 'West' and of the society to which they belong as of 'Western society'. It is the notion of history. People who align themselves with the West are at the same time aligning themselves with courses of life which have originated in history, accumulated traditions and developed standards and are looking backward as well as forward to continuous changes and differentiations which are processes of history by definition. To be of the West is to be a child of history. The verdict of cultural consciousness symbolized by the adjective 'Western' is a verdict of historical consciousness.

This feature again is a distinctive one if Western civilization is compared with other civilizations. To rely on time-honoured foundations has been a conviction inherent in other civilizations. But this reliance was not reliance on a continuity of processes and events. Institutions were legitimate not because they had been moulded by historical necessities, but because of having been established by heroic law-givers, or simply because they were ancient. Religious and poetical traditions, and the classical works which taught the people to cherish these traditions, either were of undated origin or, if dated, were regarded as the unaccountable outcome of supernatural revelation. The notions of change, progress, differentiation were not congenial to these civilizations. In the twentieth

century, it is true, Western society is surrounded by societies which define their claims by reciting their history. Soviet authorities are bent on building up a society schooled in a doctrine of social development. Asiatic statesmen and educators have contrived to make allegiance to ancestral tradition compatible with ideas of progress and reform. But Eastern historical ideologies are clearly the result of a diffusion of Western historical concepts.

We are entitled to state, then, that the concept of Western civilization and that kind of social consciousness which interprets the highest common interests in terms of history are interrelated concepts. Western civilization has discovered itself by discovering itself to have been built up by history. Western civilization has been creative just in this respect. This becomes more apparent if one remembers the well-known precursors of this historical self-understanding. Athenian culture, in its prime, produced a thinker who offered an outline of an historical understanding of the Greek world. But in Greek civilization Thucydides is the exception that proves the rule: he is conscious that his public does not share his outlook. He is far from supposing that this history is part of the 'Ourselves' which unites people of the Hellenic world. And because of this he was bound to remain 'a unique and lonely figure in Greece'. In quite a different respect the Christian conception of man's station in the world forms a precedent to Western historical consciousness. It supposes man to have become participant of salvation in the midst of history, in the time of the Emperor Augustus. This idea has had a decisive formative influence on the growth of that historical consciousness which gave shape to the concept of Western civilization. But it is not an idea of civilization itself. It is an indication of a way out of that world which means 'civilization' in the context of non-Christian thinking.

There exists an average view of history which is allied to the conviction of Western peoples of belonging to one comprehensive civilization. We may try to summarize this view in a few sentences. 'My nation', so a believing 'Westerner' would argue, 'has attained a consciousness of its own existence alongside with other nations and under the same historical circumstances. We, people of different nations, are conscious of having entered history approximately at the same time, namely in the course of events which followed the Barbarian Invasions, the break-up of the Roman Empire and the acceptance of obedience to the Roman Church in Western Europe. Whatever the church had to give then and afterwards in the realms of doctrine and erudition has always been understood as belonging to us in common. In this fact it is implied that we are united in one "Ourselves" despite our national differentiation. In accordance with this conformity we have in the long run never felt inhibited from

accepting from each other standards of piety and of social behaviour, ideals of artistic creation, methods of learning, thinking and research. Virtually all such achievements have become the property of our Western world as soon as they became the property of one of its nations.

'We, the peoples of the West, share one history, too, in respect of adding to the common heritage and building up new heritage. Our common past has meant developing new standards. And so will our common future if we are to have one. We may among ourselves disagree about the value implied in the notion of progress. But with regard to knowledge, technical equipment, the amenities of daily life and the improvement of social justice it is our common experience that we have either aimed at or submitted to demands of progress. And in addition to this aspect of the notion of development, which is implied in our Western history, there is another: individual creativity. Other civilizations which have not displayed the same energy for the sake of rational improvement in science and in economic or social conditions have no less than ourselves valued diversification and refinement of style in the arts and have paid recognition to forceful personality. These achievements are, it appears, closely bound up with national life; they are the achievements in which a nation discovers itself to be a unit of civilization. But to the Western nations they have meant another discovery. Thinkers and artists who have arisen among them have been shared in common. Styles of art and movements of ideas are thought to embody our Western culture. Not only have our nations again and again borrowed ideas and forms from each other, but their artistic and literary public has learned to regard itself as one public diversified in many countries. We have the notions of universal literature and universal art which imply that creative personalities of Western descent are by Westerners acknowledged as being 'theirs' regardless of the nation from which they originated. As we have accepted 'progress' to be a principle to which we, being Westerners, must submit, so we have accepted personality as being a value suitable to rally us in common admiration.'

3

In terms like these, men to whom belonging to Western Civilization is a matter of belief, interpret its meaning. 'Western Civilization' is not necessarily the most familiar name for the object of their belief. They may think the name of 'Europe' more appropriate. This geographical denomination is, indeed, scarcely less haphazard than that of the 'West'. Countries of other continents which have been settled by Europeans are domiciles of

people who refer their cultural existence to the same 'Ourselves'. But whosoever prefers the name 'Europe' to that of 'the West' would be justified in assuming that it is as firmly rooted in tradition.

Either name, however, seems to be in want of one qualifying attribute: Modernity. Many people may go so far as to think the expression 'the Modern World' more appropriate than any other for identifying the complex whole. The notion conveys a twofold meaning. Western society, such as we know it, is 'modern' in relation to what it once was, and it is 'modern' in relation to other contemporary civilizations. The two assumptions are not wholly consonant. On both accounts the notion of modernity is related to that of 'progress'. But while to be advanced in social and economic organization is distinctive of Western society when compared with other contemporary societies, such characteristics are not decisive when Western man takes account of his history and is aware of having passed over to the 'Modern Age'. 'Progress' has been bound up with fundamental changes in the structure of society and in cultural outlook. Equalitarian, prosaic, self-assertive, materialist, mechanical, irreligious, all these, and some other, epithets may be thought illustrative of modernity. Valuations differ widely. The hopeful note is sounded beside the despondent. But despite such divergences all who are conscious of being of the Western World will agree on that this world is a revolutionary one. This statement might seem to imply that there was once an 'Old West' which has been transformed into a 'New West'. But this implication, if present at all, does not for most people carry with it any explicit concept of what this 'Old West' was. They know and they may cherish their national traditions and cultural heritage. But it would be difficult for them to think these values co-ordinated to each other and as characteristic of an ancient Western 'Ourselves' corresponding to that 'Ourselves' in which people of the modern West or modern world have common ground. It may seem a paradox, but it is a reality: the concept of Western Civilization refers to a common history, and this history cannot possibly have been all revolution; nevertheless, Western Civilization has a distinct meaning only as the outcome of revolution.

A last connotation remains to be mentioned. It is loaded with precarious issues. The 'modern age' in which Western Civilization finds itself has meant a definite deviation not only in relation to the past of the West but also in relation to all civilizations which have so far been the outcome of human activities. For the average educated man — and therefore for many doctrinaires too — this statement bears a significance different from its meaning to the student of history and sociology. For the scholar it implies a variety of problems; for the layman it has appeared merely as a privilege. He has

learned that Western civilization is shaping the present and the future of civilization generally. He may be prepared to take account of the values of other civilizations, the defunct as well as the living. Nevertheless he can only measure other civilizations by the standards he has arrived at, and must think these Western standards to be the result of the development of civilization at large. This consciousness has firm ground in his mind when he faces 'exotic' civilizations. In this respect the two concepts of modernity meet one another half way; that which contrasts the new age with bygone ages and that which contrasts the highly developed West with the struggling East and the motionless primitives of the present.

The assumption of Western cultural leadership has had implications in theory as well as in practice. It has for some time been a foregone conclusion in the interpretation of universal history; and it has given a missionary halo to the educational policy of European nations in their extra-European dependencies. On both accounts protest has been sharp in the twentieth century — so sharp in fact that it is largely in the context of such a protest that the concept of Western Civilization is under discussion at the present day. Comparative study has bid the historian see Western society as having developed on lines parallel to those followed by other civilizations. Analysis of moral and cultural values has severely censured the arrogance underlying the claim of one society to be 'the only civilized society in the world'. Both ways of thought are united in the writings of A. J. Toynbee. But the most vehement protest has come from the societies which have been the objects of Western education or have submitted to it voluntarily. Of all the achievements of the collective activity of the West only one is recognized as being of universal value: the skill which made for technical and economic progress. But this skill is thought to be transferable in such a way that it can be acquired by peoples who live by their own spirit independent of the West. Soviet civilization seems to offer an example, if not also a model.

This criticism may occasionally be sounded so strongly as to make it doubtful to Western men whether among them they have anything in common apart from instruments and standards of physical comfort. Contemporaries who are faced with the refusal of Asiatic intellectuals to recognize any longer the absolute validity of modern Western concepts are reminded of the many moral and cultural question-marks which have attached to the notions of the 'Modern Age'. And since these notions are interwoven with that of 'Western Civilization', misgivings extend to this concept too. To the historian, however, such defeatism cannot be the last word. Once having had proof of the fact that the concept of Western Civilization is rooted in a widespread consciousness of being united in a common

'Ourselves' he cannot annul this fundamental experience. The trials to which this consciousness is exposed at the present day only serve to direct his interest to tasks of historical investigation with regard to its growth and diversification. The various and in part contrasting aspects of the concept, its seductive complacency as well as the uncertainty into which it is so easily thrown, cannot but fix his attention upon the most distinctive point in the structure of the consciousness: its reliance upon historical experience. This experience must have grown out of specific processes of history. Its complex fabric must be the outcome of cross-currents of historical contingency. To unravel the strands of confluent influences will be here, as always, the historian's task.

4

Having reached this conclusion we can no longer evade the question: of whom are we speaking? Who are the people to whom it has been important to locate themselves in the supposed community of the 'Europeans' or the 'Westerners'? Again we may first fix our attention on the present generation.

Since 1914 — the gloomy dawn of 'Western' ideologies — certain nations have been admonished to bethink themselves of being 'Western'. This has been done in view of disturbance threatening from two horizons: the one inside the Western world, the other in the Eurasian, Near and Far East. Western society was to rally against 'Teutonic' distortion of its ideals. Western countries, America in particular, were to beware of Isolationism. Western Civilization was to make a stand against the 'Declarations of Independence' brandished at it by Bolshevism, by the Chinese and Indian demands for self-determination and by the Japanese presumption of leadership in the East. In this crisis, the range within which loyalty to the West made sense should have become evident. But it must be clear by now that the determination of this range is highly ambiguous. The framework which is imagined to encompass the world of Western Civilization has been established upon divergent intentions.

Individuals are aware of belonging to the West by their very individuality and profess to be united with each other in a kind of Invisible Church. This conviction is different from, though easily confused with, another claim: certain nations are thought to be entitled, as well as obliged, to embody Western society and civilization integrally. As soon as claims of the latter kind are uttered further incongruities become apparent. In the first place, not all members of a nation are equally inclined to profess allegiance to the larger unit of the West. Urban workmen, for instance, may, but shopkeepers and country people may not. Secondly, nations

belonging to Western society have at times been authoritatively instructed to demonstrate their cultural self-sufficiency. Wherever this happens — as lately with the Germans and also with the Irish — the question how Western cultural unity harmonizes with national character becomes an unprofitable puzzle. Nevertheless — thirdly — distinctions between nations of major and minor importance in respect of representing the West seem unavoidable. The colonial offspring of European nations is not everywhere recognized as standing on a par with the mother country. Fourthly, one people, the Jews, were in large groups admitted to Western society; but it has not proved possible to make their admission a fact beyond dispute: large masses of Western men have been persuaded to agree to a racist interpretation of their own civilization in accordance with which the adopted people could be deprived of status and even of the right to remain alive. There is — fifthly — the particular relationship created by the intercourse between the West and the Slavonic nations. When joining the Western peoples in sciences, arts and institutions they were encouraged to think themselves to belong to the same world. But unquestionably in their case the membership was thought, from both sides, to apply to a section of the population considerably smaller than in the case of any 'Western' people. And this situation could not but reflect on the attitude of the 'admitted' themselves. A situation somewhat similar emerged — finally — from the Western tutelage and education to which Asiatic and African peoples were submitted or invited.

At first sight one test seems to apply in common to all claims to membership in Western Civilization. Such partnership seems to be conditioned by the ability to understand the language of the Westerners and to make oneself understood in a Western language. Western languages are, broadly, the Germanic and Romanic languages. In fact, however, proficiency in them is valued differently according to our conception of 'Western' culture. To be familiar with as many of them as possible is thought appropriate for a member of the 'Invisible Church' (though this ability alone does not, of course, qualify a man for such membership). The 'national' conception, on the other hand, makes Western Civilization appear to be embodied singly in everyone of these languages. A man may pride himself of his birthright in Western Civilization because of having command of one of its tongues. And it is especially with this way of thinking that the assumption of representing 'the only civilized society in the world' has gone. This assumption has been an inspiring element in the propagation of Western languages in the East. But English, the tongue in which the awakening of Asia was proclaimed, is now the tongue in which the Western claim to cultural pre-eminence is denied.

5

Our last observations fit in with those with which we began. The concept of Western Civilization has, since the second decade of the twentieth century, become a requisite of public life. In this respect it is a newcomer at whose introduction critical contemporaries are often moved to look askance. Nevertheless the concept, wherever it is introduced, looks familiar. It embodies the broadest 'Ourselves' of the society which is felt to be the framework in which certain nations have developed their character, certain classes their aspirations, and certain individuals their pursuits. How comes it that the concept can look new and old at the same time? We have had occasion to see how investigating the concept brings to light certain contradictions: the appeal to tradition and the boast of revolution; the selection of a minority of 'good Europeans' dispersed among the nations, and bestowing the function of standing for Western Civilization on these nations integrally; distinguishing the West from other civilizations and nevertheless countenancing a deep-seated claim to universal validity. These contradictions are what gives the concept its present strange appearance. Their becoming manifest in the present age is obviously bound up with the fact that the concept has been given an extraordinary publicity. Until the present century the concept, and the consciousness it stands for, enjoyed little importance, and they could develop divergent and even contradictory aspects unnoticed.

But the concept has now become a watchword. It is the name we give either to tasks of international co-operation or to cultural and social principles on the recognition of which nations are advised to agree internally. Admonitions to co-operate are anything but new elements of public life. What is new is that the solidarity appealed for is one presumed to unite different nations in accordance with their modern development. Such appeals are as a rule addressed to a single nation. They used to refer either to its honour and preservation or to the causes it cherished: that of liberty, of social justice, or of public morality. It is a new feature that the uniting element should be sought in cherishing a collectivity of which the particular nation is thought to be a component. The motif is, indeed, not entirely new. The Concert of Europe and the Holy Alliance both appealed to a collectivity. And so did Burke when he deprecated the 'regicide peace' with revolutionary France in the name of that liberty which he thought characteristic of 'the states of the Christian world'. But these were episodes. They show that something like the concept of Western Civilization had a place in social consciousness before the twentieth century. They do not show this concept to have proved forceful. Nations were asked to be mindful of their solidarity hallowed by history; but the success

never squared the intention. Again and again circumstances not only prevented the concept of Western or European or Christian solidarity from being a leading principle of statesmanship, but even from being a topic of debate continuously raised in public life.

Until the second decade of the twentieth century the concept was not what may be called a dominant idea; though it was implicated in many current ideas. It was alive not as a motive of concerted action but as an ingredient to which ideas and interests prominent in national and individual life owed part of their vitality. We might expect it to be referred to on various occasions. But the small bulk of the explicit references to 'Western' or 'European' civilization and to the traditions, ideals, necessities and claims implied in it, is not an adequate measure of its importance. Its importance lay in its being virtually present in concepts related to other vital interests. Among these, interests which had the tinge of 'modernity' counted primarily: the full life of the nation, the full display of individual energies, the realization of economic potentialities, the spread of social welfare.

All these topics, we now think, are related to one comprehensive concept. We are aware that the concept of Western Civilization (or 'Europe' for that matter) can be spontaneously understood to represent a living 'Ourselves' only if understood to be founded in history and to indicate a reality which owes its existence to history. But the statement bears inversion. Whenever aims and aspirations of Western men and Western nations were vitally bound up with realizing or defining their place in history, the notion of a comprehensive society embracing all these nations in their emergence and their progress was brought into view. To be conscious of having history implies a consciousness of one's place in the career of Western Civilization.

Whatever the importance of this conjecture, it certainly survives a preliminary test. Epochs in the history of historical consciousness coincide with stages in the realization of common Western concerns; and these developments are, at the same time, stages in the emergence and interpretation of the concepts of civilization and society in general.

The first stage is represented by the aspirations of the Renaissance and, more specifically, of those virtuosos of classical erudition who, following the lead of Florentines about 1400, made the term of *humanitas* expressive of what they understood to be the characteristic accomplishment of educated men. Humanist exertions moved in a limited orbit: taken as a whole they were concerned with standards of style and learning rather than with ideas. Nevertheless they were saturated with the assumption that an idea was implied. The scholars purported to resuscitate standards of cultural habit which

had once given shape to dignified life. They claimed to fulfil a historical mission and their claim was accepted as being valid. Clerics were anxious to adopt their learning, courtiers to equal their urbanity, and people of the commercial class became ennobled by humanist education. The movement had, originally, a national flavour: classical Latin was imagined to represent Italian greatness. But Latin was also the common language of Western Christendom and the classics were authorities for Western learning generally. Therefore Italian humanism was understood to indicate standards of learning and expression valid in Western Europe wherever people were schooled in Latin. And all over this world adepts of humanist scholarship learned to look at themselves as being the educators of a remoulded society. The man who soared highest in these aspirations and attained recognition as being the exemplary educator, Erasmus, came from the Low Countries and led a cosmopolitan life.

The New Learning was followed by the New Philosophy. The men who, from the age of Galilei to the age of Newton, created experimental science and discovered its rational keys were as a rule interested neither in defining their place in history nor in reshaping European civilization. They were, moreover, citizens of different countries, which were divided from one another by religious allegiance and often represented to each other implacable enemies. But these scholars were eager to learn from one another; and they communicated with one another in spite of the conflicts of their countries. That a new method of approach to nature meant a new departure in shaping civilization was at least realized by one of their early leaders, Francis Bacon. Later, this aspect of the matter, together with the cosmopolitan character of the new science, was emphasized by members of the Royal Society of London. At the same time this scientific method was in different ways understood to give the clue for understanding the nature of society: enlightened men had to acquire an understanding of the mechanism of the world in which they moved. About the place of historical knowledge in this understanding opinions were strongly divided: the methods of Hobbes, Spinoza and Locke were diametrically opposed to those of Harrington, Vico and Montesquieu. But the result was in any case that the new age was taken implicitly to be one in which a new attitude to history was to be shaped. Finally the development was surveyed in a huge enterprise of stock-taking: the French *Encyclopédie*. It purported to make society aware of the knowledge that was at its disposal owing to the exertions of enlightened spirits during the preceding generations. Written in French, but addressed to the whole world in which French was then the common language, the enterprise was a monument at once of French culture and of modern Western Civilization.

Moreover, the social orbit inside which inquiries into the state of civilization produced an effect was at that time expanding. In France society proved responsive beyond the range of all experience; and the revolutionary transformation of France was soon realized to be a European event. 'There can be no doubt', wrote Arthur Young 1791, 'but the spirit, which has produced it, will, sooner or later, spread throughout Europe, according to the different degrees of illumination amongst the common people.' This was a vision of Western Civilization as a unifying factor in society. Taking a long view, one must call it a true vision. But the European repercussions of the French Revolution were more variegated than Young could foresee. Changes of the Continental map proved, indeed, less enduring than the power of Napoleon made them appear. But though transitory, these changes, together with the attempt to recast French society, meant a challenge to historical consciousness everywhere. The response was spread out over some decades, and it followed divergent lines: it was lively in the political as well as in the social sphere. Nations were encouraged to declare their independence to be inalienable, and dynasts their rights to be inviolable. The scrutiny of the fabric of society seemed to show it to be inaccessible to arbitrary alterations; until prophets rose who pondered over the inferences to be drawn from industrial development. 'The state of Society in our days is, of all possible states, the least an unconscious one: this is specially the Era when all manner of Inquiries into what was once the unfelt involuntary sphere of man's existence, find their place, and, as it were, occupy the whole domain of thought.' So Carlyle wrote in 1831. In the realm of historical scholarship and thought methodical research as well as daring construction benefited from the situation. Constructive thought by necessity came to see the whole Western world as one collective entity. Research, as far as it was concerned with former centuries, concentrated on the national past. But the interconnection of European nations impressed itself more and more upon men's minds; Leopold Ranke declared his allegiance to the 'Romano-Germanic nation', a collectivity in which our notion of 'Western Civilization' was intimated.

6

Random observations like these go some way to show that the concept of 'Western Civilization' was, in its growth, connected with the vicissitudes of historical consciousness in the nations concerned. This connection is certainly an attractive subject for historical study. But it must be read in a broader context. The movements to which we have referred, the new learning of the Renaissance, the new philosophy of the seventeenth century, the general unrest

resulting from the repercussions of the French Revolution and the exploits of Napoleon, have contributed to building up a common body of 'Western' concerns only because there were in every people large sections of society prepared to take account of stimulating thoughts presented from abroad. It would be misleading to assume that these successive movements have alone given substance to the concept of Western Civilization. It seems more appropriate to say that these stirrings of historical consciousness have given shape to an already existing society, and at every stage of the development this relative homogeneity was tested anew. Whatever the concept of 'Western' civilization owes to the growth of historical consciousness, it became a living concept only on the basis of common achievements in social and cultural organization.

It is plausible—and, moreover, it is customary—to assume that these fundamentals of 'Western' civilization were provided in what was interpreted to the nations of the West by the Catholic Church under whose spiritual tutelage they grew up: the Christian creed, the Bible, and the Latin learning which preserved the essential products of Greek and Roman civilization. These elements, so it appears, provided a homogenous basis of education multifarious enough to suggest enlargement. And such enlargements were liable to ubiquitous appropriation because the basic learning was ubiquitous. The Medieval Church moreover was one and the same Church at every place; to all its members it imparted the concept of a ubiquitous Christian 'Ourselves'. 'Western' civilization might be understood as the 'Ourselves' of Western Christendom, transformed by the accession of secular elements which were in part rooted in the common classical heritage handed down in its rudiments by the Church itself.

In this traditional interpretation conclusive statements are blended with dialectical speculation which, on closer scrutiny, must give way. It is true that the activities of Western man developed in a society for which the tenets of Christianity represented the central interest. It is true no less that all thought and expression of thought, all art and science were for centuries schooled in classical learning and were supposed to be at their best when coming up to the achievements of the Ancients. The Bible and the Classics, these products of other soils and of bygone societies, were common ground for all that was to be civilization in the West. They provided a framework of mutual understanding. But that is not to say that they provided the ideas and interests which inspired spontaneous activity. The accomplishments which Western men came to appreciate as their own contributions to civilization and finally as the civilization peculiar to themselves, were the cumulative result of what single individuals dared to initiate. This initiative was more often than not bound up with the

desire to further the cause of national education, national literature and art. Individual initiative could, in science as well as in art, have its way only by bold deviation from standards universally accepted. Interest in national education and literature meant being uninterested in a public which spoke a foreign language. Finally, even if the creative activity was understood to be compatible with religious tradition, it led to something different from religion. And the civilization of the Western nations came to full efflorescence at a time when there was no longer a uniform Western Christian creed.

For all these reasons, the common fundamentals of education provided by antiquity, whether religious or secular, offer no sufficient explanation for the fact that Western nations proved able to accept from one another aims and principles and to become conscious that there was a peculiar civilization common to them. This result was reached only when they had travelled a long way in innovations which sprang from personal and sectional initiative. To understand this outcome we must once more remember that the concept of 'Western' civilization was moulded in historical consciousness; and we must understand the elementary conditions of the growth of such a consciousness. We must take account of the social setting in which it grew. The experience of sharing one and the same history grows spontaneously and insensibly among people who are connected with each other by national loyalties. But the concept of 'Western' Civilization emerged as a concept of international relations of a particular kind. These were relations in virtue of which people of one nation felt co-ordinated with their 'opposite numbers' in other nations. The elementary supposition underlying the conviction that there was one common 'Western' or 'European' history was that there were such 'opposite numbers'.

THE INSTABILITY OF FRANCE

H. L. STEWART

France resembles a region where volcanic forces have been recently active. Here and there the ground is seared by explosions. Deep chasms have opened. Rumbblings are heard which may betoken fresh eruptions. The passions roused in three Revolutions are not extinct. LORD BRYCE

THIS observation seems still no less apt than when an intense and sympathetic student of French politics thus summed up the situation almost thirty years ago. Some fourteen different governments have held office in France since the close of the Second World War: their average tenure was about four months each. Recently one took office and resigned it within the space of twenty-four hours. 'What is the matter with those people?' — thus asks an impatient British or American enthusiast for representative institutions. My purpose here is to show causes for their political instability, causes apart from mere petulant caprice, and derived from circumstances by which neither Americans nor British have been embarrassed. We must go back in our survey over thirty years.

1

France emerged from the Peace Conference at Versailles in 1919, where her representative had written most of the Peace Treaties, in the mood of a conqueror. She had ensured, in her own judgment, for at least the next half-century (Lloyd George said 'for the next sixty years') the disablement of her German antagonist. Not for two generations still to come, at all events, did she anticipate any need to guard against that particular danger, and there was no other danger in sight. Is it surprising that a war-weary people should have put the idea of precautions resolutely aside, with such an interval supposedly guaranteed?

But if the French people were so quick to forget danger, it remained a vivid and painful thought with the French leaders. They at least were very much alive to the risk of what might ensue, say about 1969 — ominous centenary of the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War — and the remoteness of the date did not serve to make them neglect safeguards. Time would pass quickly, and in such matters there was no time to lose. So they were much worried over the refusal of the United States and Great Britain to join in a perpetual guarantee of the French frontier. Raymond Poincaré, in his Lorraine home, used to take his guests to his study window, and

— pointing to the German hills that were well within sight — he would murmur: 'They will come again, again.' His forecast was right. They did come again, in 1940, but by that time it had ceased to matter to Raymond Poincaré.

The anxiety was quite intelligible. Germany's population was fifty per cent higher, and habitually rose much faster, than that of France. Would the Entente allies, Great Britain and the United States, neither having had any experience like the French experience of a German invader, continue to enforce even such guarantees as the Treaty supplied? Or would American and British 'magnanimity' run further and further risks with the very life of France? Foch's project of shifting the frontier, as a defence precaution, to the Rhine had been rejected. There is nothing mysterious in the doubt and fear which haunted French leaders from the very moment when the Treaty was signed in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles.

Could they pin their faith to 'collective security' — that much advertised ideal of Woodrow Wilson? Sweeping international commitments in the abstract, about 'war' and 'peace' and 'arbitration', from a motley throng such as signed the Covenant of the League and would later sign the Kellogg Pact, meant little or nothing to a realist like Poincaré or Tardieu or Flandin. These men had uncanny prevision of how abstract commitments would be explained away, before the challenge of a concrete case. The Locarno Pact held more promise, because it specified certain Powers by name, and defined their mutual obligations. But the signature of the German enemy was on that bond too. What the realist French leaders desired was a close military alliance of the Powers which had won the war, to ensure that if the German host came again — against the only one of the three whose borders it could cross — the three would automatically 'march' together. When that guarantee was refused by an American Congress which flatly repudiated Woodrow Wilson's undertakings, and when Great Britain would enter into no such bond alone, hope fell back upon at least a possible 'second best'. Would Great Britain agree to such closer application of the Covenant of the League as should define 'aggressor' to be any Power which refused an arbitrator for a dispute, and should pledge British help in such a case to the other Power? This proposal, known as the Geneva Protocol, joint product of Ramsay MacDonald and Aristide Briand, was defeated by British Conservative opposition. It was that fateful year, 1924, when excitement over the Zinoviev Letter made Russia seem the peril of perils, and a fearsome picture was drawn to British audiences, showing British troops summoned to the ends of the earth, in a cause with which Britain had nothing to do — crusaders on behalf of some State, a co-member of the League, against which Russia was waging war, with scornful refusal to arbitrate. Finally,

an effort was made by Aristide Briand to 'put teeth into the Covenant' by having the Constitution of the League so amended that an international force should be available to execute its will, and France declared her readiness to 'pool' her own forces with those of other countries for such a purpose. But nothing came of that plan either. It was the prevalent suspicion in Britain that for France the League meant no more than a facile instrument by which she might secure for herself the maximum of spoil in perpetuity from the vanquished. Thus there developed such intense strain that the French leaders, utterly distrustful of 'collective security', and disappointed in each effort to obtain a sounder British or American guarantee, turned with desperate determination to build the Maginot Line.

2

It was in a like disillusioned spirit that France had started the invasion of the Ruhr in 1923. That move brought upon her a tornado of British and American reproach. Her critics abroad argued that this was no genuine measure of national self-protection, but a piece of business for the Comité des Forges — a chance to bring the Ruhr coalfields into a single industrial unit with the iron and steel companies of French Lorraine. And it was by no means foreign comment alone which insinuated this. The articles by St Loe Strachey in the *Spectator* and Mr George Glasgow in the *Contemporary Review* were no sharper in criticism of Poincaré's policy than was the tone of an ex-Premier of France, Joseph Caillaux. He argued that the invasion of the Ruhr was a typical party stroke by 'the Right' in French politics — those pro-clerical chauvinists manœuvring always for reaction. Caillaux used to explain how Poincaré — a corporation lawyer, and an ecclesiastical — was the natural champion of this interest; how, with a professional worship of procedure, he acted in the affair of German Reparations as he would have acted with a private mortgage before the Tribunal of the Seine; how he encouraged the French people to expect 'German gold by the cart-load' — with a view to the coming general election in which this 'counterfeit patriotic currency' might be exploited to party advantage. Caillaux was not in 1923 a witness held personally in high esteem in Britain: his record in the war years, like Ramsay MacDonald's, was an obstacle in his way. But those war-time distrusts were already fading. Within a few months Ramsay MacDonald would be British Prime Minister, and Joseph Caillaux was recognized as an expert second to none on the mysterious ways of French industrial finance. Lloyd George lent his weight to reinforce the argument of the French Left. He bracketed Poincaré with Mussolini and Mustapha Kemal as another violator of the liberties

of mankind. 'French armies', he wrote, 'invade neighbours' territory, occupy it, establish martial law, seize and run the railways, regulate its press, deport tens of thousands of its inhabitants, imprison or shoot down all who resist, and then proclaim that this is not an act of war.' Just about the same time Stephen Lausanne, editor-in-chief of *Le Matin*, wrote in the *North American Review* about Mussolini's handling of the Greeks. Corfu had been bombarded, with no previous declaration of war. Shells had been hurled on a peaceful Greek city, killing school children on the streets. The editor of *Le Matin* justified Mussolini in this. He told how an intimate friend of his own had been with the Duce on the day it was done, and how they had discussed the probable judgment abroad, agreeing that 'it will be understood in Paris, but it is likely to be blamed in London'.

It seems that the Peace Treaties of 1919 released an anti-democratic French faction which had not dared during the war to speak its mind against partnership with democratic Britain. Successive moods of Anglo-French unpleasantness were stirred by such agents in order to pick a quarrel and disrupt the hated alliance. 'Anglophils' and 'Anglophobes' in Paris during the 'Twenty Years Truce' are to be explained by a dispute not directly about England. The 'Sacred Union', which had hushed these conflicts while the German enemy was at the gate, was sure to lose before long, after the Peace, its magic power. How far the conflict was indeed about Anglo-French relationship and how far about some internal difference which this relationship served only to illustrate, is disputable. But that the renewed French party strife soon dislocated Anglo-French harmony, is certain. Admiral Darlan's speeches, Pierre Laval's diplomacy, the journalism of Marcel Déat and Charles Maurras, the reasons assigned by Marshal Pétain for collaboration with Hitler, are a few proofs among many.

3

A dozen years after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, observers in Paris had begun to wonder whether the Third Republic would soon be overthrown and the country would 'go Fascist'. Those who wanted to promote such a change set themselves to inflame to the utmost national resentment against Britain, as the war-time ally sure to disapprove and discourage their project. Hatred had been nursed for half a century by partisans of the old royalist regime against the republican structure set up to get the German occupation forces withdrawn in 1870 (like the Republic of Weimar, set up with similar unwillingness by Germans, under similar need to appease a victor in 1919). Now the chance to translate this hatred into action had perhaps come.

Multiplication of parties in the French Chamber provided many a ground for reasonable complaint. At first sight, there is nothing obviously wrong with the 'group-system' that developed in the legislative assembly of the Third French Republic, as contrasted with the division into two and only two great parties which has prevailed both in the British Parliament and in the American Congress. It can even be argued that the French system, under which an elected legislature must last its statutory four years, would ensure more stable government than the British habit of holding another general election when the party in office has suffered a single defeat in the division lobby, and only by facile recombination of groups was this French system practicable. Yet in the French Chamber of the years that followed the Treaty of Versailles, as in the German Reichstag of the same period established under the Constitution of Weimar, the multitude of parties proved at once a symptom and a source of decay in the essentials of democratic government. M. René de Chambrun puts it with terse clarity:

In the short space of twenty-two years, between the victory of 1918 and the Battle of Flanders, the French Republic had been governed by forty-two Prime Ministers and more than one thousand Ministers.¹

This meant that no administration was given time to work out any distinct plan of public improvement, and that responsibility for faults could never be fixed on any particular administration — as it is so readily fixed in Britain — because there was always the facile defence: 'We were interrupted by loss of office before we had well begun.' At Westminster, where it is realized that defeat of the Government in a vote will mean not only its resignation but a dissolution of parliament and another fight by each member (at considerable expense) for his seat, members think long and carefully before they precipitate such a result. At the Palais Bourbon, on the other hand, where the deputies had no such alarming personal prospect to deter them, but knew that the only consequence of defeating the Government would be another kaleidoscopic shifting in the personnel of the Ministry, there was no reluctance to 'give the premier a fall'. There was even temptation to do it often, for the private deputy had always a hope that his own time might come somehow, as transformations and regroupings continued, for some modest share in the spoils of office. Where Ministries were so often reconstituted, chance was improved for the hangers-on of a possible new Minister — what Bulwer Lytton once called 'the glorious ferment in Parisian Society, bringing dregs to the surface'. There are dregs in a Legislature, as elsewhere.

¹ R. DE CHAMBRUN, *I saw France Fall*, p. 184.

In the second decade of the Twenty Years Truce these tendencies of French thought and feeling — national resentment against Britain, party strife rekindled at home — at first sight so different and antagonistic, began to produce a single result. This was a weakening of France for the next fight with Germany, both in her spirit and in her resources.

It was obvious to any visitor in the France of the 1930s that something had gone wrong with the historic republican enthusiasm for Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. For example, in the prevalent manner of speaking about Czechs, Poles, Spanish Republicans, and — as a luminous supplement — in the manner of speaking about Fascism. One could see the change being led by a certain group, long familiar to observers of the French political scene, but stirred to a new energy that betokened new hope, and able to count on a stronger following. Mussolini's success had intoxicated the French anti-republicans like new wine. Effort after effort of their own to contrive the same sort of thing, in years gone by, had failed. As the oldest of them recalled the Boulanger project, and those not so old thought of the brief glittering promise in the Dreyfus affair, they had long despaired of upsetting the 1875 Constitution. Their royalist committees might hold conference; their collaborating women's royalist groups, wearing the emblem of the green carnation, might plan the ceremonial of Philippe's return; the young *camelots du roi* might brandish their white sticks amid the amused tolerance of onlookers in a Paris street; *l'Action Française* might present in every issue its headline about the forty kings who had made France, and its pungent anti-democratic satire from the pen of Daudet or Maurras; but there was no real hope of a royalist restoration in the breasts of those who knew practical politics. The hateful Republic had its roots too firmly planted. Not a single declared royalist could win a seat in the Chamber. The whole scheme, for the Bourbon exile in Belgium, had become like a lingering Scottish Highland dream about 'Bonnie Prince Charlie'.

But, lo, a new courage was born of the example on the other side of the Alps. The Italian democracy which so short a time before it had seemed vain to challenge, had collapsed there under Fascist attack. There must be something peculiar, something unique in the circumstances of post-war Europe that the genius of Mussolini had turned to such account. What Mussolini had done, others surely might imitate. Now, if ever, the hour for French anti-republican action had struck. Why not work from the Fascist pattern upon French soil, and — who could tell? — perhaps with the Duce's co-operation?

Above all, in the disorder of the years immediately following the

great economic débacle of 1929, this hopefulness soared high. Revolutionaries find their special opportunity in 'hard times', and although France was among the last of European countries to feel the Depression acutely, it reached her in the end, with the usual consequence in fierce complaint against the Government for being incapable or dishonest or both. Watchers for the chance of an anti-republican *coup* felt that the tide had at last come up to their stranded ship, and they began to prepare for adventurous launching. Neither Boulanger nor the conspirators who forged the *bordereau* for indictment of Alfred Dreyfus had circumstances nearly so favourable for insurrection. The searching eye of Mussolini, with his sinister knowledge of the pathology of parties in foreign States, detected this as the time to spend the Italian taxpayer's money in great quantities across the Alps. How much in the sequel was due to the influence, at first covert, afterwards bold enough to act openly, which his agents brought to bear on French newspapers, and on leaders of groups in the Chamber, it is impossible to estimate: but it is generally known that Fascist bribery in hard cash on a lavish scale at the time of the raid on Abyssina was the source of the pretended fear on the part of deputies lest the Italian fleet might prove too strong in the Mediterranean for British and French fleets combined. It took time to work up an imposture such as that. Suborning witnesses (especially for falsehood against their own country) is an enterprise for both skill and patience. Zealots in Paris for the Hoare-Laval proposals of 1935 were not produced all at once. *Nemo repente fuit turpissimus*.

Britain as 'the mother of parliaments', leader in declaring 'will of the people' the basis of all genuine government, and in holding government to periodic accountability at a general election, was a principal object of hatred to the anti-republicans of France. So they seized the opportunity to inflame anger against Britain on grounds that might afterwards serve them for a purpose of very different character which it was not yet safe to avow.

For this reason, those who would later be known as the circle of Marshal Pétain talked ceaselessly about England's desertion of France, about the manner in which 'perfidious Albion' had served her own ends in disregard of her ally, about the proof (long maturing, but at length complete through betrayal of the Treaty of Versailles) that entanglement with England had been a cardinal mistake of French foreign policy. This theory, later proclaimed from the house-tops by such men as Laval, Darlan and Marcel Déat, had to be insinuated at first with caution, even under apologetic disguise, as the planners of incipient French Fascism were feeling their way. Irresponsible sheets such as *Gringoire*, which they could repudiate at once if the public reaction to such journalism proved hostile, served for many an experiment in the creation of Anglophobia, and — much as they

hated the very name of Georges Clémenceau — there were passages in that final angry manifesto by 'the Tiger' called *Grandeur and Miseries of Victory* which it served their purpose to quote. It supplied them with testimony, from a witness surely authoritative, about the persistent nibbling under which the Treaty — that safeguard of France for the future — had crumbled. And did not all men know who had done the nibbling?

The inference these intriguers had in mind became thus clear. It was for France, they argued, in a mood of stern realism, to enter into a new European *entente*. In the language of commercial life, she should face facts, 'cut her losses' in the old Anglo-French partnership, and come to a working arrangement (not perhaps of the sort she would choose if her choice were altogether free, but the best then available) with continental Powers she had previously shunned. With this in mind, she must overcome certain old prejudices; and as she endeavoured to do so, under strain of practical necessity, it might turn out that their source had never been other than misunderstanding.

In such terms, leaders like Pierre Laval began to dwell upon the natural affinity of the Latin races, suggesting a co-operation with Italy and Spain; the project of a Mediterranean League, to take the place of the League between France and the two Powers, one Saxon and the other Slav, that had proved so fatal to her. In the first years of the second decade of what I have called the 'Twenty Years Truce', no one yet dared to advocate in Paris collaboration with German rather than with British policy; but the high services of Fascist Italy to civilization were becoming a constant theme in French papers of 'the Right'. 'You have written the most glorious page in your country's history', said Pierre Laval, in proposing the toast of the Duce's health at a banquet in Rome, and to his associates in Paris as he urged co-operation with Fascist world designs, he would whisper: 'I know Mussolini like the palm of my hand.'

The year 1933 will be ever memorable in the history of French democracy. Daladier was in office, and his problem was very much the same as the problem which two years earlier had confronted Ramsay MacDonald in Britain. On the one hand, a national deficit already at an appalling figure and mounting fast year by year: on the other hand, stubborn — even furious — popular resistance to every scheme for either higher taxation or reduced expenditure. Large financiers would not hear of heavier income tax (stopping a still greater percentage of dividends at the source), of heavier tax on motor fuel and tyres, or on the profits of water and gas and electric companies. They would welcome, however, a cut in the pay of civil servants, and with this — beginning at five per cent and rising to ten — Daladier proposed to attempt budget reform. It would apply also

to pensions, military and naval. But the civil servants were too angry, and too strong, for the Cabinet. The Premier's following in the Chamber, under threats from the electorate, deserted him, and he resigned. Why not try an immediate and a gigantic inflation, asked certain business leaders. Daladier replied that he would rather resign: he knew too well how desperate under inflation would be the plight of the civil servants on fixed salaries. In such circumstances, at the close of 1933, he yielded the helm to Albert Sarraut.

What could Sarraut do? Timidly he made again his predecessor's proposal to the civil servants, and met with the same crushing reply. To observers in Canada or in the United States it must seem that a civil servant — or anyone else — with salary not quite equal to thirty-five dollars a month had good reason to protest against a further 'cut'. No doubt the 10,000 francs annually, below which Sarraut proposed to find taxable income, was worth more in purchasing power than its nominal equivalent in dollars. But not even a considerable allowance for this would make the French civil servant's income (below 10,000 francs in January 1934) appear fit for further government exaction.

How tense party feeling in France had become was soon to be shown to all the world by what happened in Paris on February 6th, 1934. That scene on the streets round the meeting-place of the Chamber of Deputies was destined to come back to mind in the summer of 1940, when the section of French leaders so deeply involved in the riot reappeared as those 'men of Vichy' in Mr Churchill's biting satire. The outburst, too, was quite a surprise. That good old placid journalist, Mr Sisley Huddleston, less critical of Paris than he had been a dozen years before, had in a recent dispatch from the spot paid his tribute to the French capital, relatively so calm 'in this heaving, plunging world'. How must he have felt when he had next to explain away the spectacle of 50,000 rioters battling there all night with 14,000 police, the Legislature breaking up in wild disorder and machine guns playing from the steps of the Palais Bourbon? The pretext for the uproar was what had become known as 'the Stavisky scandal' — financial sharp practice on a great scale by a fraudulent promoter whom French Cabinet Ministers had strangely recommended, and whose immunity from punishment had been attributed in the anti-government press to official connivance. It was indeed an unsavoury story, with enough foundation in fact — apart from the lurid imaginative glosses by which it was every day more and more embellished — to call for criminal prosecution of men in high places. President Roosevelt at that very time was taking strong measures to protect the American citizen against such piracy on the Stock Exchange, and anyone who suggests that official government connivance in a case of the sort was peculiar to the wicked French Republic may

well be asked wherein the Bayonne Pawnshops affair was more heinous than Teapot Dome had been in the United States. France had herself passed through many a previous financial scandal, and the Stavisky business was in some respects a trifle when compared with that of the Panama Canal corruption, in which not just a few officials, but no fewer than one hundred and forty-six deputies were steeped in disgrace. Those most disgusted over Panama did not propose in consequence to overturn the French Republic, any more than those disgusted at Washington by Teapot Dome proposed to cancel the Constitution of the United States. The proper method of protest on the part of righteously indignant Frenchmen was not to assemble a mob of 50,000 in the approaches to the Palais Bourbon, to attempt to storm the entrance with a volley of bricks and tiles and glass upon the guards on duty, to hurl policemen into the Seine and slash the bellies of their horses with razor blades. Twenty-three persons lost their lives that night, and what would have happened if the 14,000 police had not been able to stop the rush upon the Chamber, where the deputies hated by organizers of the riot were shut up, it is not hard to guess.

From that date, more than six years before French Fascists openly preferred German domination to the continued sovereignty of France as a Republic, no informed observer was any longer in doubt about conspiracies in Paris. Already one Premier had announced his discovery of a plot to wrest the Government from the elected Chamber and commit it to 'a few energetic men'. Another had spoken of a possibility that the Republic might have to 'abdicate'. French groups, most suggestively like the Italian Black Shirts that had raised Mussolini and the German Brown Shirts that had raised Hitler to power, were obviously getting ready for some bold step. The groups were by no means of identical, though in this respect of coincident, purpose. *Action Française* had only a few thousand members, university students for the most part, and though it attracted most notice in the foreign press (chiefly through the literary talent shown in its journal), its avowed projects of return to monarchy, decentralized government and rigorous nationalism in foreign affairs did not seem sufficiently practicable to be dangerous. A manifesto from the Duc de Guise (the royalist Pretender), offering to assume the burden of royalty for the nation's sake, met with a cold reception. But much more like business was the procedure of the *Croix de Feu*, with its 140,000 members: its motto was the familiar anti-Communism that had served so well both in Rome and in Berlin. It was made up chiefly of war veterans: it emphasized constantly the danger of a General Strike, against which the Government provision was altogether inadequate, and it boasted its own power of immediate mobilization at any time without the use of

either telephone or mail. The purpose of the *Jeunesses Patriotes* was more difficult to define with certainty, because persons of such different types had been enrolled in it. One was mystified by a 'League of Youth' which Georges Clémenceau had joined at the age of 86. When Marshal Lyautey was enrolled (at the age of 80) just a few months before the night of rioting, the *Jeunesses Patriotes* too became classed as a private army of 'the Right', and its alleged membership of 300,000 was added in intelligent estimate to the anti-republican host. In view of what the private armies of other countries had done, the design at Paris could be missed only by the wilfully blind. Especially when such writers as Tardieu added to the familiar pamphleteering of incipient despotism.

But the time had not yet come when (with the support of German troops and German airplanes) the French Fascist revolutionaries could venture to show their hand. A tentative experiment was tried in the revision of the Republican Constitution by way of strengthening the Executive at the cost of weakening the Chamber of Deputies.

5

The date of the events in Paris described above was four years before Daladier's humiliation at Munich, five years before Georges Bonnet's last-minute effort to betray Poland as he had betrayed Czechoslovakia, six years before sovereign France capitulated to Germany and at Germany's order abolished itself. Keen eyes in Berlin were, of course, scanning the Paris bulletins, and reports were pouring in to the Nazi inner circle from the agents hard at work on formation of a Paris 'Fifth Column'. Editorials in the British and the American press were fairly laden with speculation on whether France would recover her republican balance by a drastic treatment of her neo-Fascists, or would slip further and further down the 'authoritarian' slope, to the surrender not only of her democracy but of her sovereignty. It was the latter alternative that was followed, not deliberately chosen, but rather 'blundered into'. No drastic measures with neo-Fascists were ventured: it was rather the neo-Fascists who took drastic measures with the Republic. A palliative programme in the first instance was tried, under direction of the veteran Paul Doumergue and a 'National' Government including leaders of many parties. Doumergue was so popular, and — in his old age — had such prestige all over the country: surely he, if anyone, could rally the patriotic effort which had never failed France at an acute crisis. When he set to work — in Mr Alexander Werth's apt comparison 'like Cincinnatus to the rescue' — the leader of the *Croix de Feu* bethought himself of a different figure, at least as vivid. He remarked that it had been decided to apply a poultice to a

gangrenous leg. People remembered that afterwards, and gave Colonel de la Rocque credit for a keen analysis as well as a pungent epigram. Another memory that came back to them was of Paul Doumergue's confident estimate on his return from a Russian tour — that the Tsardom had never before been so well established in popular loyalty. He said that just a month before the Russian Revolution. Not a very reliable diagnostician of public disorder was this French Cincinnatus. The jest of the moment was about the Cabinet of Old Men that he brought together in the second week of February 1934. 'Do you realize', a Frenchman asked me, after examining the list of new French Ministers, 'that their combined ages amount to a period longer than the Christian era?' In Berlin the comic press had a query: 'Why is France ruled by men of seventy-five?' The correct answer was: 'Because the men of eighty are dead.'

Looking back now upon that tumult in the Paris of 1934, with the developments of five years later to suggest a clue to much that was then puzzling, we are at once struck by the sudden and immensely diffused fear of an internal conspiracy at work against the Republic. A spectacular protest, meant to arouse the whole French people, was at once organized by the leaders of the working class. The one-day General Strike of February 12th, on no complaint about wages or hours of labour, but simply to advertise everywhere the horror and alarm of the French workpeople at the threat of a returning despotism, was the largest-scale action that had ever been taken by French trade unions. Not a single newspaper — except, suggestively, *l'Action Française* — appeared that day in Paris. *L'Humanité* estimated the number of demonstrators in the Cours des Vincennes at 150,000, and the trade union officials boasted that not fewer than a million in the capital had co-operated in the Strike. All over the industrial centres of France there was a like report, the figures from some showing even a larger proportion of workers in the display of proletarian solidarity. There was nowhere even a hint of violence: the police had no task but to look on, as that immense orderly multitude registered everywhere its alarm at the incipient plot against the free institutions of France.

This one-day gesture of indignation and disgust was made not only by those always at the beck and call of strike leaders: it enlisted those commonly aloof from participation in strikes — practically the whole postal service, for example, and the school teachers, and the municipal employees. 'In the face of the Fascist menace', said the inscription on a banner, 'insurrection becomes a duty. We shall not allow the suicide of the Republic.' It was the same spirit which quickly organized the Popular Front, uniting all groups, however otherwise different, that were resolved to save, if possible, the heritage of Free France from the designs upon it that were at length

apparent. The same Popular Front would within two years install Léon Blum as Premier. Its formation was watched, with mockery both of the alarms that had prompted it and of the remedies it proposed, by the venerable Cabinet Ministers who had come from various groups at the call of Doumergue 'to stabilize France'. Looking back, one notes among them Henri Pétain, then seventy-eight, who was Minister of War. Already new slogans about 'Order and Discipline' began to be coined. Marcel Déat, whom we later learned to know so well, was trying in the press his scheme for a French version of National Socialism. Tardieu, with his avowed belief that Frenchmen in a Cabinet under democracy are nearly all either rogues or imbeciles, had purposes we may conjecture in taking ministerial office. 'I am sure', said the eloquent and satiric M Gaston Bergery, speaking in the Chamber when it opened under the Doumergue regime, 'that none of you gentlemen on the Government bench are Fascists; with all respect I add that one has but to look at you for assurance of this. But I am no less convinced that your government will, unintentionally and indeed unconsciously, facilitate Fascism in France.' What did M Bergery later think of the charitable qualification with which he had limited this forecast? Obviously in Britain a crisis on such vast and intense scale would have been met by 'a general election to clear the air'. And it is to be remembered that there was then no Nazi peril yet dangerous for France to forbid such a method. But the old custom of recombining parties in the Chamber so that it might run its statutory term, continued to prevail: the old tragic error of contentment with a stabilized Cabinet in a country more and more torn by strife.

It is part of the malicious legend circulated against France that her downfall in 1940 was due to M Léon Blum's Socialist administration of four years before, by which the National Defence services had been starved in a wild bid for proletarian popularity by 'sharing the wealth'.¹ That is simply untrue. The reference to *panem et circenses* that comes so readily to the pen of an anti-French satiric writer is rendered irrelevant by the record. M Blum's government did not reduce, it increased the appropriation for National Defence. Thus once more, as Browning said: 'Fancy strikes Fact and explodes in full.' Of like significance is General de Gaulle's answer to the pretence that Marshal Pétain and his associates appealed in vain during the pre-war years for airplanes and tanks and motor equip-

¹ Cf. M René de Chambrun's explanation: 'The *Front Populaire* had taught our men that democracy conferred upon them an innumerable number of rights; rights to jobs, to the dole, to pensions, to all individual liberties, and to everlasting peace . . . Daladier, Blum and Thorez obtained the votes, but their administration has given the people war, defeat and foreign domination.' It is perhaps suggestive to remember that M de Chambrun is Pierre Laval's son-in-law.

ment. The General's two searching questions remain still unanswered: (i) At what time, on what dates, did Marshal Pétain make such appeal? and (ii) Can the Marshal mention any occasion when he ever refrained from opposing just such appeal put forward by others? Moreover, the pressure to which M Blum's government was subjected, the restraint imposed upon its foreign diplomacy by the Powers then so anxious to conciliate Mussolini, Hitler, Franco, will not bear recalling if a case is to be made for indictment of the France of 1936. Mr Attlee and Mr Bevin at least, in 1949, must have been quick to appreciate the force of M Blum's words, written in a German prison in 1942:

When a *Front Populaire* government tried to secure general acceptance for the great reforms that had become the one alternative to bloody revolution, the bourgeoisie accepted them only reluctantly, through fear, and then, ashamed and embittered by its own fear, did all it could by violence or by trickery to go back on its word.¹

It has been the argument of this article that the instability of the French Government has been due in part to France's perilous geographic position, where she has been by turns encouraged to trust to 'Collective Security' and disappointed to find this explained away into uselessness whenever its application to a concrete case would involve her co-signatories in danger to themselves. Hence her oscillation between two types of leadership: that of idealists, who urged complete co-operation under the various international Covenants, Treaties, Pacts she has signed during the last thirty years, and that of realists, who have advised cunning anticipation of the tricks of other Powers at her expense; sometimes a Briand or a Herriot, sometimes a Flandin or a Laval. The changes were often so sudden because the national peril was so suddenly realized, and a Power such as Britain or the United States, under no immediate menace from an utterly unscrupulous neighbour, made less than the allowance due to such alarm. Mr. Churchill's unfailing sympathy for France, as contrasted with the coldness of other British leaders, came from his superior discernment of this — as of many another — international situation in recent years.

But this, while part of the explanation, is not the whole. The Third French Republic has had within it, from its establishment, a treacherous group biding the time for its overthrow, and repeatedly these fanatics for *l'ancien régime* have thought they saw their chance in exploiting national alarm. They exaggerated wildly the extent to which France was being betrayed, and incited no less wildly a counter betrayal. Panic was one cause of incessant changes of government,

¹ LEON BLUM, *For All Mankind*, p. 79 (Translation by W. Pickles).

but the craft of traitors using the panic was a further cause. *Tout comprendre est tout pardonner* is an over-generous formula. But it has its application to present politics in the country of its origin, whose service in the past should not, by her recent political tossings to and fro, be obliterated in the memory of a Europe she so long led in freedom's cause.

THE ECONOMICS OF UNDERTAKING

HARRY G. JOHNSON

'Such an undertaker . . . needed the power of going to the centre of each practical problem as it arose; concentrating the forces of his mind on it; working out connections between it and outlying considerations; developing practical conclusions with a just sense of proportion; and pursuing resolutely the line of policy thus indicated, but with a mind always alert for new ideas, especially such as were demanded by the changing circumstances and conditions of his problem.'

Marshall, *Industry and Trade*.

ALTHOUGH sociologists and anthropologists have long been interested in the stimulating effects of interment rites on the efficiency of productive and distributive organization in primitive economies, professional economists have by and large neglected this important problem in economic dynamics. Nor have they attempted any institutional study of the production and marketing problems of the modern undertaking industry, so that the lay economist has had to resort for information to the unfamiliar and non-specialist literature of the popular novel. In the interests of stimulating empirical research, this article attempts a preliminary analysis of the industry's major economic characteristics.

From the standpoint of industrial classification, undertaking presents an interesting problem: on the demand side it is a capital-goods industry, on the supply side it is a service industry. If classified by technological process employed, it constitutes a branch of the packaging and container group: the union affiliation of some of the industry's employees in the United States has in fact been established by this criterion. The difficulty of reconciling the demand and supply characteristics is largely responsible for the modern form of the industry and current trends in its development, particularly the growing importance of public relations and the tendency towards increasing selling-expenditures, product-diversification and full-line forcing.

The demand for undertaking is a demand for a consumers' durable good, differing from the demand for other consumers' durables only in the non-recurring nature of the want — a characteristic which is biologically determined and hence not amenable to modification by price-concessions or selling-expenditures. There are exceptions to this generalization. On the one hand, if demand analysis is conducted in the modern fashion with the household rather than the individual as the utility-maximizing unit, it is possible for the undertaking firm to increase the number of sales to each consumer by the usual techniques of monopolistic competition; but the decreasing size of the family unit and the increasing mobility of labour in modern

times greatly reduce this potential source of elasticity in the firm's demand curve. On the other hand, there are intermittent opportunities for the repetition of a sale arising from exogenous factors such as the posthumous growth of personal prestige and the stimulating effect of wars on the international exchange of cadavers. In general, however, each individual sale exhausts its own market, so that the marketing problem of the undertaker is a dual one of maximizing the cash value of the individual sale and tapping the largest possible number of individual markets. Both are general problems in public relations or salesmanship, but the solution of the former is facilitated by other special features of the demand.

The nature of the product as a consumers' durable good might indicate an analysis of demand as deriving from a probability distribution of expected future services extending through time. Lack of information as to the value of the flow of future services in a society not believing in bodily resurrection, and extreme uncertainty as to the probability distribution of those (unspecified) services in an agnostic and materialistic civilization have, however, so shortened the economic horizon of the purchasers of undertaking that the marginal efficiency of interment has come to depend almost entirely on a conventional evaluation. But the conventional evaluation is itself capable of further economic analysis, since for any given undertaking decision it is related to two economic variables — the personal income of the decedent, and the general level of past undertaking expenditures. These two parameters set limits to the magnitude of the funeral commitment.

Within these limits, however, the conventional evaluation of the marginal efficiency of interment lends itself readily to manipulation by the undertaker, for two reasons. In the first place, the psychological condition of the purchaser at the time of making an undertaking decision is for obvious reasons far from that required by the rationality assumption of economic maximizing behaviour. Not only is 'the rationality of irrationality' strongly advised by the circumstances, but the most favourable conditions exist for the application of the techniques of suggestive as well as informative advertising.

In the second place, since the magnitude of the funeral commitment is generally regarded as an index of socio-economic status, its relationship to the two economic parameters mentioned above may be analysed either as a particular case of 'conspicuous consumption' on the lines developed by Veblen, or as one aspect of the continual 'criticism of standards' discussed by Knight. On either line of analysis, the outcome is a constant upward pressure on the standard of dying, which creates favourable conditions for the application of skilled marketing techniques.

From a more modern theoretical viewpoint, undertaking may be

described in the terminology of micro-economic analysis as an industry subject to 'external diseconomies of consumption'. It is unfortunate that contemporary economic analysis has concerned itself solely with the unfavourable welfare implications of such cases of interdependent consumers' utility functions, and completely neglected their favourable effect on economic growth. In terms of macro-economic analysis, the interment function displays a 'secular upward drift', or, by a more recent formulation, contains a Modigliani-factor. The Modigliani-factor facilitates the manipulation of demand by the undertaker through imparting a strong autocatalytic effect to successful efforts to deepen the market.

The emphasis on advertising indicated by demand analysis is reinforced by considerations on the side of supply. From the funeral director's point of view, undertaking is a service industry: the raw material is supplied by the customer, processed according to the customer's order, and returned to the customer in finished form. While this feature of the industry eliminates the risk involved in production in advance of the market, which is in any case rendered impossible by the nature of the technical processes employed, the necessity of building up a flow of orders large and regular enough to meet fixed costs and yield a reasonable profit on the investment reinforces the dual concern of the undertaker with maximizing both the number and the value of sales. On the other hand, the technically optimum scale of operation would seem to be small relative to the average size of the modern undertaking establishment. Indivisibilities of equipment seem to be relatively unimportant, as the basic necroscopic processes require no very expensive machinery; there is little possibility of economies from by-product utilization; and the departmentalization and division of labour characteristic of the largest and most up-to-date establishments would seem to be a result of successful adaptation to the requirements of the market rather than an independent source of production economies. Similarly, while the growth of vertical and lateral integration has undoubtedly permitted substantial economies of overhead costs, particularly in selling-expenditures, the trend towards combination is itself a reflection of the requirements of the market rather than the result of a search for administrative economies.

The scale of operations of the modern mortuary establishment is therefore not primarily attributable to the engineering problems of funeral direction, which is still fundamentally a handicraft industry. The explanation is rather to be found in the requirements of the market for the undertaker's services, although monopolistic restriction of the supply of master morticians has been a contributory factor.

The marketing problem of the undertaker, as previously analysed, is a dual one, calling for a dual market strategy — an extensive public

relations programme designed to increase the number of sales, and an intensive advertising campaign aimed at maximizing the value of the individual transaction. The extensive public relations problem has been solved in the past, and to a large extent in the present, by the creation of monopolies of goodwill based on local or religious identification. Goodwill has in such cases been further fostered by lateral integration with the furniture trade and local government; both of these industries share with undertaking the characteristics of high value of individual transactions and low rate of turnover, and have a corresponding interest in building up goodwill. Such lateral integration not only effects significant economies in the overhead costs of public relations, but spreads the risks of investment over industries subject to somewhat different patterns of seasonal fluctuation.

For the more ambitious undertaking firms, however, local or religious affiliations have proved unduly restrictive of sales volume, and the emphasis has instead been placed on public relations campaigns of the usual commercial type, suitably modified to meet the requirements of public taste. Thus advertising displays have come to stress the quality of the product and the reputability of the firm, while avoiding the grosser appeals characteristic of the soap and deodorant trades.

The development of commercial advertising has had two conflicting influences on the form of business organization in the industry. On the one hand, it has promoted the development of large-scale mortuary establishments capable of exploiting the market by providing a fully-diversified range of undertaking and associated services; the amount of capital required by these establishments tends to encourage corporate organization. On the other hand, large-scale commercial advertising has undoubtedly contributed to the retention of the partnership form of organization as a basis for advertising appeals stressing 'the personal touch' in the relationship between the mortician and his clientele.

In addition to an extensive public relations programme, successful undertaking requires an intensive campaign to increase the cash value of individual sales. The possibility of manipulating the conventional evaluation of the marginal efficiency of interment is considerably increased if the funeral director is in a position to offer a wide range of product qualities and auxiliary services — a fact which, in conjunction with the requirements of sales volume, has stimulated considerable expansion in the size of the typical establishment. On the one hand, growing awareness of the advertising value of an attractively turned out product has led to increasing emphasis on details of finishing, evident in the emergence of specialized craftsmen such as the faciologist and cosmetician, and of specialized techniques for coping with what were formerly regarded as closed-coffin cases. On

the other hand, the desirability of offering a complete range of funeral services has led to the development of both vertical and lateral integration.

Vertical integration extends backward into the provision of ambulance services, and forward into the provision and maintenance of cemetery plots. Lateral integration comprises the provision of chapels, organ music, and ministerial services for the burial rites, and fleets of saloon cars for the funeral procession. The overhead costs of the saloon cars are sometimes defrayed by part-time employment of them as taxi-cabs. In the United States, the typical funeral director is also prepared to provide an escort of motor-cycle police; such escorts are available to the mortician at a low price, as a by-product of machine government and the patronage system.

The establishment of a fully integrated and diversified undertaking plant capable of satisfying the demands of the market created by effective public relations requires a major capital investment. The necessity of protecting the investment has led to an emphasis on full-line forcing through the provision of 'all-inclusive' funerals, and to intensified monopolistic competition between undertakers, one result of which has been the emergence of the 'bargain funeral'. The larger establishments have also attempted to control substitutes by operating their own crematorial departments.

While the trend towards larger-scale establishments is chiefly attributable to the marketing problems of the industry, a contributory factor has been restriction of the supply of master morticians and funeral parlours. In addition to the inhibitory effect of a low social evaluation of the net advantages of undertaking as an occupation, the supply of master morticians has been restricted by industrial control over apprenticeship regulations and training institutions. In particular areas monopolistic restrictions on the location of undertaking establishments have been administered by the local trade association and occasionally enforced by agreements with the manufacturers of undertaking supplies. The unstable oligopolistic situation created by monopolistic restriction of entry has stimulated efforts to increase competitive strength by building further flexibility into the productive organization and increasing expenditure on public relations, with effects on the scale of undertaking which have already been analysed. The ploughing back of surplus profits into the firm has probably been further fostered by the family character of many undertaking establishments, and the rural origins and outlook of a number of funeral directors.

This investigation therefore ends where it began — with a sociological problem. It is hoped, however, that the intervening analysis has had the effect of stimulating interest in the economic aspects of a long-neglected industry.

BOOK REVIEWS

JOHN MURPHY: *The Origins and History of Religions*. Manchester University Press, 25s. net.

Books on the comparative study of religions are always bewildering in their vast array of facts, and must be as difficult to write as they are often to read. Not the least difficulty, for writer or reader is that, from the nature of the case, few could be expected to have an 'inside' appreciation of more than one of the world's great religions. The result is that, for the most part, religions become the names given to great areas of 'objective fact' whose record is about as inspiring as that of the properties of the elements in a school-certificate text-book of inorganic chemistry.

If a prospective reader looked casually at the Contents of Professor Murphy's book, and saw that it ranged from the Religions of Babylonia and the Classical world to the Religions of India and the Far East, that it was so detailed as to mention the Sufis of Islam and a consideration of the latest work on the Mandaeans of Iraq and Iran, he might well be prepared for the worst. But he would be mistaken. Here is a book eminently readable, and it is so in large measure because of the particular method of treatment it adopts. But the method has another advantage. It not only makes the book far more than a mere catalogue of abstractive facts: by its very character it enables the writer from the outset to do greater justice to religions as they enter into the total experience of man, to religion as a concrete and integrating experience. The book is therefore not only made more readable; its viewpoint is likely to be more reliable as well.

What then is this method? It is said to be 'in reaction from the evolutionary method' (p. 9) and to arrange its materials 'in a series of what are called Horizons' (p. 9). Of these, there seem to be five:

(1) a 'primitive horizon' — Animatistic (Marett) — where the 'object' of religion is Mana, a 'mysterious power' predicated of everything which excites awe, and in which, it is suggested, both Magic and Religion have their roots (pp. 71 *et seqq.*).

(2) the *Tribal Horizon* — Animistic — where belief is in 'quasi-personal spirits' and where Mana has become a 'personality like man's own' (pp. 97 *et seqq.*). Here we have a morality founded on 'the obligations and prohibitions of Taboo' and 'a universal belief in, and employment of, Magic' (p. 124). We are indeed at the level of 'savages' (p. 97).

The next three levels are more difficult to delineate, and in a sense might all be called the Civilized Horizon, but Professor Murphy separates them out as follows:

(3) the *Agricultural Horizon* when man's concern with fields, and cattle, and weather centre his religious instincts on Fertility Cults, astrology and the like (p. 11).

(4) the *Civilized Horizon* — whose 'three most prominent features' are: 'the power of conceptual thought', 'the use of ethical standards of judgment' and a 'developed sense of a man's own individuality' (p. 223).

(5) I am not clear where this *Prophetic Horizon* is best mentioned. In one sense it is a 'focal point' in the development of the civilized mind and shows in a marked degree the features specified in (4) — it testifies to the immensely creative and formative moral influences of great individuals. Yet, as in the case of the Hebrew prophets, it can certainly occur within the Agricultural Horizon. But this difficulty may only be a special case of the point made in my remark introducing these last three sections. Indeed, that the relations between sections (3)

to (5) are rather inadequately analysed is also suggested when on p. 335 Professor Murphy illustrates these culture horizons from Chinese religion, but there speaks of what 'we have called alternatively the Civilized Horizon or the Prophetic Horizon'. Altogether, and as a general criticism, I think that the last three Horizons need more careful description and discrimination.

There are other questions too we may feel moved to ask about this 'Cultural' approach, as it is called on the dust cover where it is distinguished from the 'Common Feature' or 'Historical' approaches.

I am not clear in what sense it may be said to be 'in reaction from the evolutionary method'. It certainly makes no presupposition that the 'latest is the best'; nor does it suppose that any one stage is completely subsumed under the next. On the contrary, as illustrated in the religions of India (of which we are given a fascinating and detailed account), many contemporary religions may be analysed into several of the Horizons discriminated above. I suppose then, that Professor Murphy might say, and in answer to my general criticism noticed above as well as indicating his divergence from the 'evolutionary method', that the Horizons need to be in something of a muddle to be true to empirical experience itself. But, all the same, we read of Chinese religion that in it we have 'a pattern of development traceable in other civilizations and their religions' (p. 339) and this proves to be one from the Tribal to the Civilized Horizons. Is not this the Historical approach?

Or again, on p. 413, he claims that 'in this historical and comparative study of Religions' it is the 'common qualities or the shared elements' which are of interest, as being clues to 'the universal character of religion and its essential nature'. Is it not difficult then to claim great difference either from the 'common feature' or from the 'historical' approaches, unless the writer means chiefly to point out (and quite truly) that his approach (as we have noted above) centres our attention more than any other on the concrete character of all particular religions as they exist in a specific environment? To talk of a 'Common Feature' religion is to make the same sort of abstract mistake as would suppose that The Dog runs about the streets or that the Plain Man sits in the Tube. The 'historical approach' to a contemporary religion may on the other hand confuse a tale of historical development, with its philosophical analysis. But if neither mistake is made in this book, I think it is rather because nothing is said as to the philosophical presuppositions of this Method of Horizons than that the Method can be supposed to be presuppositionless. Remarks, like that on p. 413 just noticed, show that presuppositions are then all right; and they will be none the better for being only implicit.

Besides these general considerations there are one or two points of detail I would like specially to mention, even if briefly:

- (1) One of outstanding interest is the development of the thesis that the most primitive religion was not animistic (see Horizon (1)). He explicitly criticizes in particular Tylor's Animistic theory in relation to Fetichism (pp. 68, 69) and rejects the views of de Groot and W. E. Soothill that the primitive religion of China was animistic (pp. 345 *et seqq.*). My feeling is that until a fuller philosophical account is given of the Method of Horizons the debate will continue.
- (2) In connection with Hebrew religion, Professor Murphy suggests that it is the peak of those religions which are discernable at the Agricultural level, showing as it does unmistakably the characteristics of Prophetic religion. He guards the generalization by talking of 'the religion of the Old Testament at its best' (p. 171) but, even so, I doubt whether many would agree that the Hebrews were distinguished for their 'capacity for abstract thought' or that they applied 'ethics to human conduct and to

- divine beings' (p. 171). Could any phrases be more foreign to the Hebrew approach?
- (3) There is very special contemporary interest in his analysis of Japanese 'religion of patriotism' (p. 399), as well as in his comment (though in particular regard of China) that religions exemplify no 'national gifts' but more likely 'the human tendency in man to take the easier way' and to compromise (pp. 329-30).
 - (4) This same critical common sense, and caution, can be seen in his treatment of Totemism where there can also be found at one point confirmation of what we have supposed he means by the historical approach, and which he rejects. 'To find a resemblance between a rite of savage folk and a Christian sacrament is no proof that the later and the higher have originated in the earlier and lower forms' (p. 90).

Altogether, the book contains a wealth of detail, critically expounded with a lively vigour and enthusiasm. The Method of Horizons is certainly helpful both in stressing the concreteness of religion, and in schematizing a vast array of facts to make them intelligible. But it leaves unanswered many questions that need to be asked before we could say whether it is anything more than a useful methodology; and while Professor Murphy has shown us some presuppositions he rejects, I am not clear what he accepts, and what criteria of truth or worth he would use in regard of religions and their development at the various Horizons.

I. T. RAMSEY

REX WARNER: John Milton. *Max Parrish*, 6s. net.

This short book, in the *Personal Portraits* series, is more important than its length or claims suggest. Mr Warner disclaims any originality of opinion; yet it would be a narrow definition of the word that denied him originality in these three ways. Though belonging to a generation which found Milton a poet you had to argue about whether in attack or defence, Mr Warner takes him quite easily and serenely. Next he shows an unusual gift for seeing through the peripheral or detailed things to the fundamental. And last he writes so well that what in another writer might be derivative or commonplace becomes fresh and full of meaning. Not of course that one should dissociate these three virtues. It is because Mr Warner can see the fundamentals of Milton's genius all together that he is not worried by certain things in it — his hastiness and his sometimes harsh judgments for instance — which in isolation can disturb. And it is for the same reason that Mr Warner's gifts of style can find that unequivocal moral certainty necessary for them to be exercised to the full.

The book consists of introduction, biography and criticism. The biography is sufficient for its purpose and well proportioned. In the criticism I think Mr Warner gives too little space, in proportion, to *Paradise Lost* and that he goes too far when he claims that *Samson Agonistes* is 'as perfect as *Lycidas* and very much more powerful'. But as a whole the criticism is positive and perceptive. The chapter on Milton's prose illustrates conspicuously Mr Warner's gift of serenity in reading Milton. He is cool and easy in refusing to be put off by the less pleasant things in that prose. He writes:

Milton is one of our very greatest prose-writers, with a tremendous range of style and feeling. He also expresses with more force and more clarity than anyone else some of the ideals of protestantism which have shaped English and European history ever since his times. And if to us now his enormous fervour on the subject of some particular and contemporary reforms seems exaggerated, we should remember that to him the struggle between authoritarianism and liberty of conscience was just as real as are the similar struggles of our own time.

Best of all is Mr Warner's short introduction. Readers of Milton are now less prone than those of the older generation to cut Milton into pieces, whether with Walter Raleigh into poetry (sublime) and theology (moth-eaten), or with Belloc into poet (deliriously enchanting) and man (blackguardly), and to take him, as they take other great poets, as a whole. But no one, as far as I know, has expressed this new conviction of Milton's totality so well as Mr Warner. His main theme in his introduction is indeed Milton's unity-in-diversity; and the following will serve as a sample:

To some minds the most forbidding thing about this great poet is his perfection. What he intends to do he does, according to his own standards, exactly. Yet his perfection is not that of a brilliant writer of Latin verse (which he was) or of a consummate lyric poet (which he also was). Beneath the polish and exactness of a style influenced by Virgil, by Ovid and by the Greeks move and flash out sometimes the fanatical and Hebraic passions of a reformer, sometimes the frenzy of a disappointed lover, sometimes the languors of a most extreme sensuality, often the pride of genius and often the humility of a man before God. It is a perfection that contains and somehow fuses together the most violent and apparently incongruous elements.

E. M. W. TILLYARD

S. T. BINDOFF: *Tudor England*. Penguin Books, 1s. 6d. net.

The 'Pelican History of England' has got off to a flying start in this volume with which Mr Bindoff has set his successors a very high standard indeed. More than that, he has written what has long been needed: a manageable modern survey of the most critical century in English history, most readable as well as most scholarly, extraordinarily full despite its comparative brevity. At the same time he has avoided the obvious temptation: not only is this — to quote the blurb — 'history with the politics put in', but it is also history with the inanities of social picturesqueness happily left out. In 300 pages Mr Bindoff has touched upon practically every aspect of his subject and has managed to elaborate most: the administrative recovery of Henry VII is dealt with as fully as are the vagaries of Elizabethan religious history; the war with Spain becomes as clear as do the economic problems of the age. Naturally, in a book of such scope and written with a distinctly individualistic approach ('this,' the author says, 'is my story, and I am sticking to it'), there are points of disagreement: it is likely that he will be challenged by the champions of either faith, sufficient evidence of his impartiality on the thorniest subject of all. Wise words are said on Thomas More which will not please the adulators: while More's place in history is safe enough, his place in the history of his time has often been overrated, as has his freedom from the drawbacks of an age whose public morals can excite little sympathy. Here, too, Mr Bindoff strikes a happy mean. One reader's chief query is the view of Henry VIII as the architect of the Reformation: was this man whose reign was marked by futility whenever he lacked a great minister really a far-seeing statesman capable of conceiving a vast and detailed plan? More detail on administrative and constitutional matters might perhaps be asked for in a history of a century famous as an age of 'good government', though space may very probably not have served. All the new things are made to appear to be the work of Henry VII, who surely did little more than restore the full vigour of medieval kingship; it may be held that the real innovators were the great ministers — Cromwell, Winchester, Burleigh — who after 1529 set about reforming the machinery of the state to fit it for the new demands made upon it. It may also be suggested that Mr Bindoff seems to have overestimated the part played by Parliament in the Henrician Reformation; it registered facts and provided penalties, but its role did not become active and 'original' until Somerset let go so many of the safeguards of

the prerogative. However, these are small points to raise in connection with a book which seems quite faultless in its treatment of the last two Tudors: the short section on the complicated reign of Mary is as masterly as the more spaciouly proportioned account of the reign of Elizabeth. Perhaps the most valuable chapter is that on the economic problems and theories of the mid-century, a subject on which it is to be hoped that Mr Bindoff will now say an authoritative word on a large scale. In the meantime he has written a history of the sixteenth century which will at once become indispensable to the student as much as to the general reader, a book whose most striking characteristic is that it leaves out nothing that really matters, nor includes anything that does not matter at all.

G. R. ELTON

BRITA M. E. MORTENSEN and BRIAN W. DOWNS: *Strindberg, an Introduction to his Life and Work*. Cambridge University Press, 12s. 6d. net.

It is fortunate for Strindberg's reputation in this country that the centenary of his birth should have been overshadowed by the contemporaneous Goethe bicentenary. Since the tribute paid to him was modest and not extravagant, we need not fear that, as in the banquet scene in *To Damascus*, the festive golden goblets will change to earthenware. Indeed, the chief merit of the book by Miss Mortensen and Mr Downs is that it does not attempt to glorify Strindberg. It tells the story of Strindberg's life briefly and clearly and presents a methodical and compact survey of his prolific literary production.

In Mr Downs's four chapters dealing with the life, lightness of touch is combined with meticulous research. His footnotes are a joy. Not only do they provide a progressing and critically evaluated bibliography, details of the publica-

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LONGMANS

tion of Strindberg's writings, and information about family connections and matters of topographical interest, but also they are seasoned with entertaining parenthetical comment.

Since violence and half-madness are the failings most commonly ascribed to Strindberg, a detached study of his emotional life is particularly welcome. Mr Downs emphasizes how great a shock to an overwrought temperament was the prosecution for blasphemy in 1884, and deals at some length with the so-called 'Inferno crisis', which approximately covers the period in Strindberg's life from the parting with his second wife at the end of 1894 until the final return to Sweden in 1896. Many of the experiences of these years, when Strindberg, hounded by fears and hallucinations, turned to alchemistic experiments and Swedenborg, are reflected in the works *Inferno* and *Legends*, which, although they are often an unreliable guide to his condition, are yet of more interest as autobiography than as imaginative writing. Quite appropriately, therefore, greater attention is paid to them in this part of the book than in Miss Mortensen's chapter on the autobiographical writings as a whole. Mr Downs does not attempt a personal assessment of Strindberg's mental condition, preferring to quote four conflicting medical opinions which leave us wondering whether Strindberg was so abnormal after all. A footnote informs us that the author has not seen a book by W. Hirsch entitled *Genius and Degeneration*, an omission which neither he nor we need regret. Mr Downs refuses to take his gloomy subject too gloomily or to be misled when Strindberg strikes a pose — it is good to find him describing Strindberg after the first divorce as 'so depressed that he could not even indulge himself in a first-class quarrel', and to hear that during the Inferno crisis Strindberg 'could not bow his stiff neck to make himself completely a theosophist — Helena Blavatsky was a woman!'

Miss Mortensen contributes five chapters on the works (The Plays, The Novels, The Short Stories, The Autobiographical Writings, and The Miscellaneous Works) and writes the Conclusion. She begins each of her first three chapters with a brief survey of how the branch of literature concerned had developed in Sweden before the time of Strindberg. This not only helps us to measure the great advances in dramatic and narrative expression made by Strindberg but also reminds us quite simply that he was a Swede. Miss Mortensen does not fail to point out Strindberg's kinship with French writers, and with Nietzsche and Maeterlinck; she renews our acquaintance with the Naturalist plays (including the important manifesto of Naturalism in the preface to *Lady Julia*) and with the enigmatic dramas of dream and reality of the later period. These are the works on which Strindberg's European reputation is mainly built. But fortunately she also devotes considerable space to two plays which are almost unknown to the English public — *Master Olof* and *Gustavus Vasa* — both historical plays which for all their Shakespearean flavour, yet remain vigorously and sensitively Swedish. Again, when considering the novels, she shows how Strindberg, by nature a Nietzschean and a biting critic of society, was also the poet of Stockholm and the skerries. Particularly interesting is her analysis of *The People of Hemsö*, a work unfortunately not yet translated into English. This tale of Carlsson, the cunning farm hand, who marries for power and money his employer, a widow, only to fall a victim to his own deceit and perish in a frantic race across the breaking ice, is a typically Swedish mixture of grim humour and lyricism. *The Red Room*, for all its satire and brilliant portraiture, is shown to be more than a dated Naturalist novel; here, and in the last of the autobiographical writings — *Alone* — Strindberg has succeeded in expressing the timeless spirit and rhythms of his native Stockholm.

It would be wrong to suggest that Miss Mortensen is for ever stressing Strindberg's Swedishness; she warns us, moreover, that '*The People of Hemsö* is usually considered to be one of Strindberg's least characteristic works in any genre', and

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that '*Gustavus Vasa* is far and away the most successful of Strindberg's later historical plays, though not the typical one'. But by paying due attention to such works she gives balance to her appreciation. We are left with the impression that Strindberg, for all his 'fluidity', retained the virtues of his national literature and was more than a rootless European with a gift for expressing dramatically the unpleasant and the macabre.

HAROLD BORLAND

CRANE BRINTON. *English Political Thought in the Nineteenth Century*. *Benn*, 15s. net.

Professor Crane Brinton's book was first published in 1933. He has reprinted it unaltered, and declares himself to be on the whole in agreement with the Crane Brinton of two decades ago. There can be little doubt that he is wise in his generation. To have tried to alter it in the light of all that has happened since 1933 would have involved trying to discover the origins of the mind of the twentieth century in the mind of the nineteenth, and Professor Brinton sees no reason 'why historical writing should be an exercise in either hindsight or foresight', let alone an exhibition of wisdom after the event. He spares us 'trends', 'attitudes', 'patterns', and the rest of the not very sweet jargoning of the critics who make their bread and butter out of 'the contemporary situation'. Instead, he has made a collection of critical essays on the thought of some 'British *politiques et moralistes* of the last century'. In between an Introduction and a Conclusion, he has packed them neatly into three sections under the headings: 'The Revolution of 1832', 'Chartism' and 'The Prosperous Victorians', and the whole thing comes to us rather like an American food-parcel, beautifully packed and labelled, with lots of cellophane, and a fine smiling gloss over everything. It is easy eating, too, unlike the badly packed parcels of plum-duff that Professor Hearnshaw used to unload on us at intervals under the label 'Social and Political Ideas of some Representative Thinkers of...' the Middle Ages, the Age of Reaction and Reconstruction, or what-not. Professor Brinton writes gracefully, he has a ready wit, and he rarely throws in any of those sticky lumps of sociological jargon that so often make American studies in politics unpalatable. It is one of the most alert, agreeable and humane collections of essays in its subject that American scholarship has given us.

After this, it may seem ungracious to criticize Professor Brinton for not writing another kind of book altogether. And yet, some such disagreeable criticism becomes inevitable as soon as one asks: to whom — on this side of the Atlantic — is this kind of book directed? Not, surely, to the 'general reader'; he will ask for more historical background; what Professor Brinton gives is too allusive for this kind of reader — and almost superfluous for anyone else. As for the specialist, although he may enjoy the verve (and even the nerve) of Professor Brinton's judgments, he is not likely — after Hort, Muirhead and Professor Willey — to find much illumination in the analysis of Coleridge as an 'Idealist' and some sort of Tory Democrat; nor, after Halévy and Mr Plamenatz, will he be led to think any new thoughts about the Utilitarians. Meanwhile, the teacher of political thought will put his pupils to the texts of his Bentham, Mill, Green, Acton and Bagehot for the sake of the discipline of discovery which can come only by the hard way of the texts and never from the dubious revelation of a summary. He may, however, find it useful to refer the student to Professor Brinton's excellent account of those lesser figures of the English intellect whose original writings are no longer profitable to read, but with whose salient characteristics he ought to be familiar: Herbert Spencer and Benjamin Kidd, for example. The student reading English (as she is taught) will certainly be directed to the essays on Kingsley and

Carlyle and (possibly) Newman, as he is already directed to Lippincott's tabloid versions of *The Victorian Critics of Democracy*; an unfortunate state of affairs, at least in the case of Carlyle and Newman, since it is too often implied, if not actually stated, that this second-hand reference to the authors of *Past and Present* and *The Idea of a University* is all that is worth while. Professor Brinton's book seems all too adequately designed for the camp-followers of what was once the 'modern' approach to English literature. The fact is that, as a whole, it is unlikely to please or satisfy anyone, although almost everyone will find something pleasing in it. Both its inadequacy on the whole and its particular virtues arise from the same source: namely, its author's avowed and premeditated method.

Now it is undoubtedly true that no one could make a whole out of 'English political thought in the nineteenth century', and that no one should try. The age lacked unity of experience, and its political thought sprang out of an intellectual and emotional anarchy. Professor Brinton gives adequate prominence to the variety and disagreement of his thinkers. He argues forcibly for the method of 'thinkers' rather than of 'schools of thought', not only on the ground that the temptation to discern patterns where there are none, to explain -isms by other -isms, is all too powerful in such a disordered period, but on the ground that, since the eighteenth century, great thinkers, or schools of thinkers, have ceased to represent the substantial reality which constitutes the public mind at any given point. He is rightly aware that we have now to deal in 'the climate of opinion' or 'the psychological matrix' of a period: 'to include some part of what went on in the minds of inarticulate Englishmen'. Finally, he frankly concedes that men are at bottom evaluating animals, and that there must always be a large subjective element in our choice of thinkers as 'representative'. And yet — when he has strung his representative thinkers together, the weakness of the method is most strikingly revealed in the case of just those 'thinkers' whom Professor Brinton

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includes in order to show what was happening 'in the mind of the common man'. Nothing could be more misleading than the impression one gains from seeing Brougham, Cobbett and Owen set in a succession which begins with Bentham and ends with Coleridge. In a total account of the social movement of their age, these figures are profoundly significant. Weeded out as 'cases' of political thought they look impoverished, and, in the case of Brougham, grotesque. The process makes them seem not larger but far smaller than they really were. Moreover, the succession-of-thinkers method can never be left to speak for itself. In the end, Professor Brinton feels obliged to venture some 'general and tentative conclusions as to the trend of English political thought in the century'. Looking for traces of unity along such familiar threads as the nineteenth century's cult of history, or its devotion to the idea of progress, or its increasing interest in psychology, leads quickly to confusion and contradiction. There is something to be said for the description of nineteenth-century England as an age, if not of history, at least of historicism; yet its teachers were taught by Bentham who treated history with contempt, and by Coleridge who made it the handmaid of philosophy. Again, possibly the nineteenth century believed a little too uncritically in progress; yet with Carlyle and Bagehot it came increasingly to respect the power of its most obvious enemies — heredity, the irrational and the unconscious.

The answer to chaos is to be found neither in an imposed order, nor in a series of samples. The best hope of an answer, so far as the nineteenth century is concerned, lies in asking the right questions, and the first of these might profitably be: why has no one yet written the nineteenth-century equivalent of Leslie Stephens's great book on the eighteenth century? Professor Brinton is content to record this fact without comment (and, strangely, without reference to the nearest thing to an *esquisse* for that achievement, Mr G. M. Young's *Victorian England: Portrait of an Age*). When that question is properly answered, the method of writing such a work will dictate itself. Until then, we must make do with collections of essays, instead of histories, and be thankful when they turn out as lively and humane as Professor Brinton's.

R. J. WHITE

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The inclusion of any book in this list does not preclude its review in a later issue

KENNETH R. ANDREWS: *Nook Farm, Mark Twain's Hartford Circle*. Harvard University Press: Oxford University Press, 31s. 6d. net.

H. E. BATES: *Edward Garnett*. Max Parrish, 6s. net.

W. BEARE: *The Roman Stage, a Short History of Latin Drama in the Time of the Republic*. Methuen, 25s. net.

EILEEN BIGLAND: *Ouida, the Passionate Victorian*. Jarrolds, 16s. net.

ALAN HOUGHTON BRODRICK: *Pillars of Hercules, the Iberian Scene*. Hutchinson, 18s. net.

S. B. CHRIMES (Ed.): *The General Election in Glasgow, February 1950, Essays by Members of the Staff of Glasgow University*. Jackson Son & Co., 15s. net.

WILLIAM CECIL DAMPIER: *Cambridge and Elsewhere*. John Murray, 10s. 6d. net.

MAURICE WILLSON DISHER: *Mad Genius, a Biography of Edmund Kean*. Hutchinson, 21s. net.

JOHN W. DRAPER: *The Twelfth Night of Shakespeare's Audience*. Stanford University Press: Oxford University Press, 40s. net.

P. S. GERBRANDY: *Indonesia*. Hutchinson, 18s. net.

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